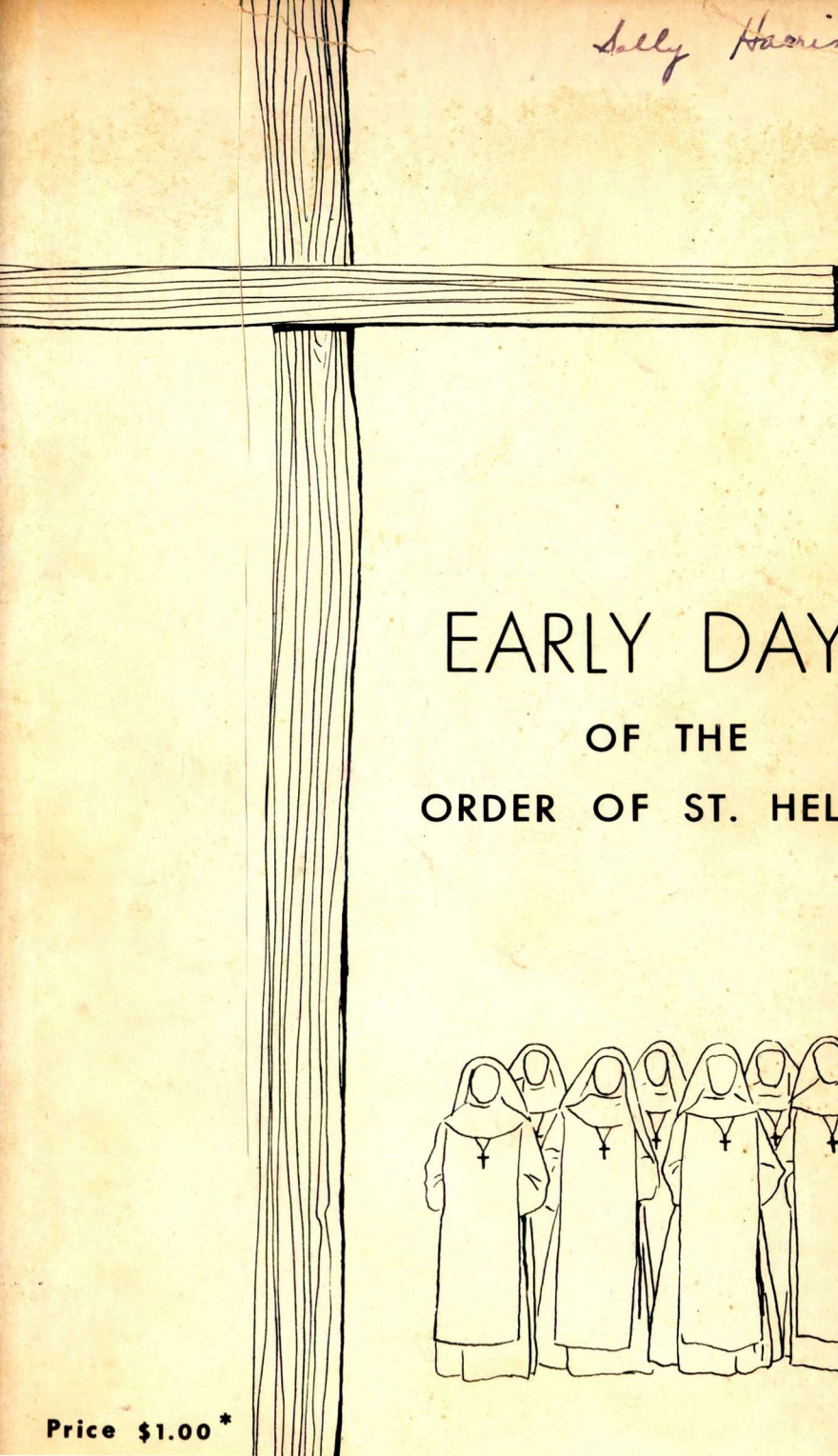


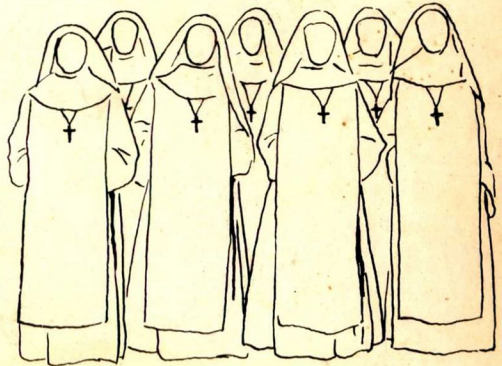
Sally Harrison



EARLY DAYS

OF THE

ORDER OF ST. HELENA



Price \$1.00 *

EARLY DAYS

OF THE

ORDER OF ST. HELENA

by all the Sisters

with a forward by William R. D. Turkington

Superior, O.H.C. and O.S.H.

Introduction and Epilogue

by Alan Whittemore, O.H.C.



* One Dollar : Post Paid

The Convent of St. Helena, Route 4, Newburgh, New York

(Proceeds for the Sisters' Chapel Fund)

Foreword

by the Reverend William R. D. Turkington

Superior, O.H.C.

This is to congratulate the Sisters on the informal little book which they have written for themselves and their friends, and to tell them how happy we of the Order of the Holy Cross are that they are living by the Rule of our Founder, Father Huntington. We thank them for supporting us by their prayers, as we try to support them by our own.

I know that they, for their part, would want me to thank Father Whittemore on their behalf for his share in their work; and Mr. Richard S. Hart, Jr. and Mr. E. Gorton Davis for supervising its publication. Messrs. Hart and Davis are members of St. Paul's Parish, Riverside, Connecticut; and Associates of the Order of the Holy Cross.

SPECIAL EVENTS

1892-1896

"Eastern Kentucky High School" opened in the autumn of 1892 under the auspices of Thomas Underwood Dudley, Bishop of Kentucky. The name was changed to "The Ashland School for Girls" in 1896, by which time it was under the jurisdiction of Lewis William Burton, first Bishop of the new Diocese of Lexington.

1899

As "The Ashland Seminary for Girls" it re-opened on September 13, 1899, with house and grounds at Versailles, given to the Diocese of Lexington by Mr. Swift Darneal.

1902-1903

The original house having burned on March 22, 1902, the cornerstone for "Margaret Hall of the Ashland Seminary" was laid on December 9; and on September 17, 1903, the new building was dedicated.

1905

The name "Ashland Seminary" was changed to "Margaret Hall." (Later, it was a junior college for a time and was called "Margaret College.")

1931

The St. Anne's Sisters took over "Margaret Hall School" in the summer; with Mother Louise the Superior and Father Powell S.S.J.E., Warden.

1934-1938

Mother Jeannette, Superior

1938

Father Powell died and also his successor, Father Frank Gavin (Professor at G.T.S.). Father Whittemore, Superior O.H.C., became Warden.

1938-1945

Mother Rachel, Superior

1945

On November 7, The Versailles Chapter of O.S.A. released the Sisters, not from their vows but from O.S.A.; the release to become effective the following day. November 8, 1945, marks the birthday of the Order of St. Helena; the Sisters transferred obedience to Father Whittemore as their Superior.

1946

The new Versailles Convent was blessed on June 30.

1947

On August 4, the O.H.C. Chapter passed a unanimous resolution endorsing the Sister's observance of the O.H.C. Rule under O.H.C. direction and opening the way to further bonds between the two communities (implemented eventually by an addition to the O.H.C. Constitutions). September 3-4 the first Annual Meeting of the O.S.H. Chapter adopted the O.H.C. Rule for their own. On September 4 the Sisters renewed their obedience to Father Whittemore, but now as the formal representative of O.S.H. and its Rule.

1948

On April 1 the building at Helmetta was taken over for the Mother House under the generous provision of Wallace John Gardner, Bishop of New Jersey. Formal residence began on September 27.

1953

On March 24 we took title to the Newburgh property. The first Mass was celebrated by Bishop Campbell, Superior O.H.C. and O.S.H., on July 3; and our new Mother House was blessed on October 2 by Horace W.B. Donegan, Bishop of New York.

OFFICIALS of, or connected with, O.S.H.

Superiors

The Reverend Alan Whittemore, Superior, O.H.C., 1945-1948
The Right Reverend Robert E. Campbell, Superior, O.H.C., 1948-1954
The Reverend Leopold Kroll, Superior, O.H.C., 1954-1957
The Reverend William R.D. Turkington, Superior O.H.C., 1957 -

(For Assistant Superiors, see Introduction.)

Sisters in Charge and Prioresses

- Versailles: Sister Rachel, after being Sister in Charge for 8 years, Prioress 1953 -
- Helmetta: After Sister Ignatia had been Sister in Charge for about three years (until the close of 1950) her successor, Sister Josephine, became Prioress in 1953.
- Newburgh: Sister Josephine, Prioress 1953 -

Novice Mistresses

Sister Ignatia, 1945 - December, 1950
Sister Josephine, December, 1950 -

Chaplains

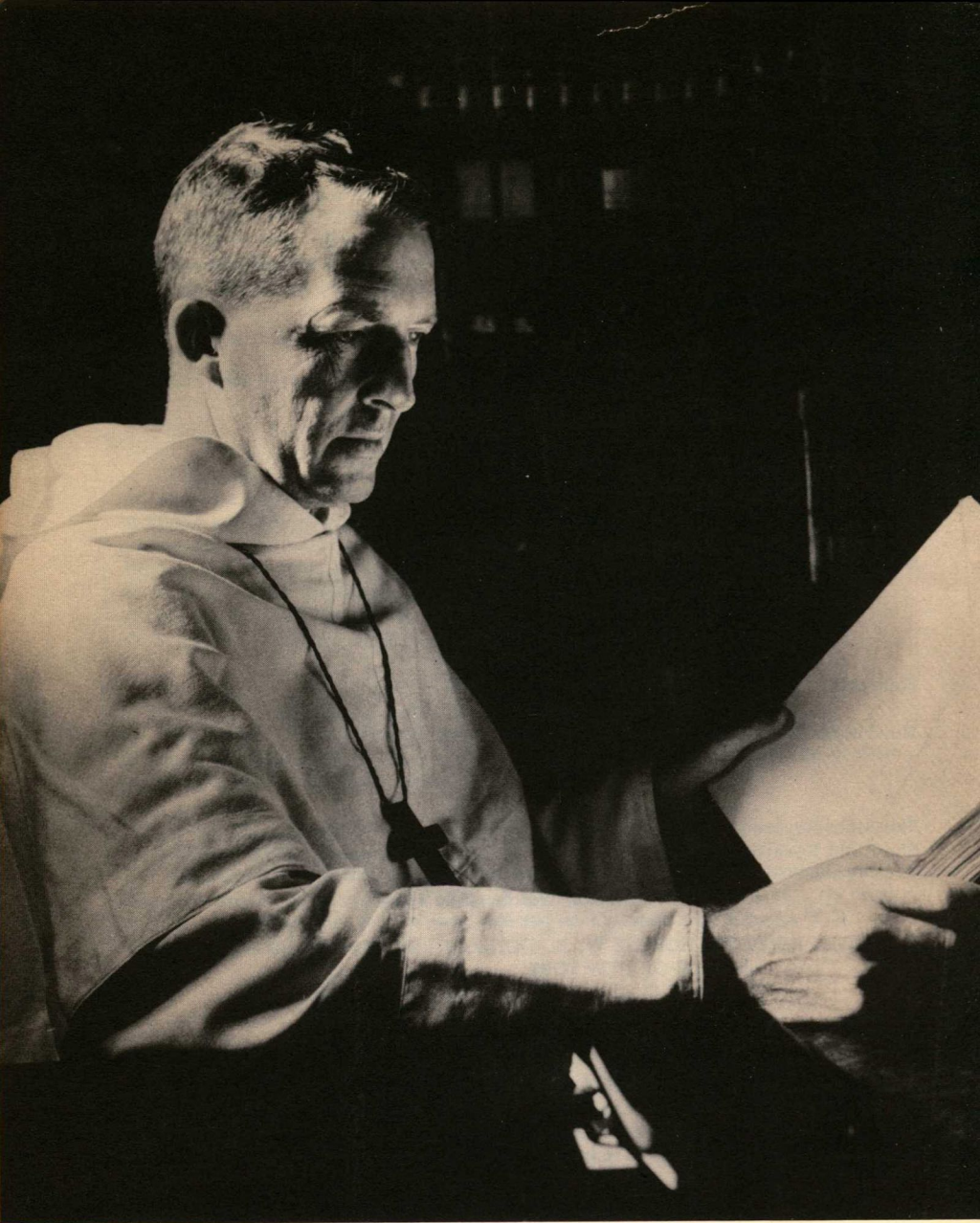
- Versailles: The Reverend Felix Cirlot, 1945 - 1946
The Reverend Pomeroy Hartman, 1946 - 1949
The Reverend George A. A. Tocher, 1949 - 1954
The Reverend Alan McKinley, 1954 - 1957
The Reverend Charles Ford, 1957 -
- Helmetta: The Reverend C. E. McCoy, 1948 - 1952
The Reverend Ronald Lane Latimer, first half of 1953
- Newburgh: The Reverend Frank L. Carruthers, June 1953 -

Visitors

The Right Reverend James Matthew Maxon, Bishop of Tennessee, 1945 - 1947
The Right Reverend Theodore N. Barth, Bishop of Tennessee, 1948 - 1954

Present Visitor: October 21, 1954 -

THE RIGHT REVEREND HORACE W. B. DONEGAN, D.D., S.T.D.
BISHOP OF NEW YORK



Father Whittemore, O.H.C., First Superior of the Order of Saint Helena

Introduction

by Alan Whittemore, O.H.C.

The correct pronunciation of Versailles is Vur-sales; for that is what they call it in Kentucky. The French imitations both of place and pronunciation are absurd.

In the charming little town of Versailles (Kentucky) there is an enormous brick building called Margaret Hall School. Despite the building's spaciousness it has a very homey atmosphere without and within.

This edifice houses an exceptionally happy group of girls. And the thing that struck me most about them, from the time of my first visit in 1938, was their obvious affection for the Sisters who ran the school. It was a healthy affection; not sentimental and sickish. Of course a particular girl might like this Sister more than that, but it was the trust and loyalty and naturalness of all the girls in their attitude toward the Sisters as a group that I felt so strongly. I said to myself: "The women must be very genuine who inspire a love like this."

Since then I have come to know them intimately as individuals. I have been borne up by their virtues and exasperated with their faults (as they, poor souls, often have been exasperated with mine). But through it all, that first impression about them has never had to be revised. The Sisters are weak, proud, sinful critters like the rest of us; but they are real. You will see that, when you read their letters in this book. And despite their failings I am convinced that every one of them is trying her level best to give herself to God.

The ones, naturally, who impressed me most on that first visit twenty years ago were Mother Jeannette - always courteous, affectionate and gentle - and her two chief lieutenants. (Another of our veterans, Sister Mary Teresa, had not joined them yet.) I don't know which of the two to name first; for Sister Ignatia was the senior in age and Sister Rachel by date of Religious Profession. Anyway, all through the years they have enriched the Order not only by their individual contributions of character and insight but by the strong tensions between them; the most significant feature of their tensions being, however, a deep underlying love and loyalty toward one another. So, as the young fry of succeeding generations of Sisters come along, the three whom they must look back to and revere with deepest gratitude are, in the order of their profession, Sisters Jeannette, Rachel, Ignatia.

But it was not merely respect and admiration for the Sisters that got me

so deeply involved in their affairs during their ten most critical years. It was, at least as much, the extraordinary complications they got into; you will hear more about them from the Sisters themselves. Generally speaking, these complications were not the Sisters' fault, but were thrust upon them. In any case a man cannot stand by when he sees a canoe tip over without throwing what ropes he can.

Perhaps it would be truer to say that (for seven years as Warden and three more as the first O.S.H. Superior) I was in the canoe myself, along with the others, as we shot tortuous rapids. And the great wonder was that, by God's good grace, the canoe never tipped over at all; and that after the headlong, willy-nilly rush it came into broader and more tranquil waters.

At all events I would not for the world have missed those years which immediately preceded and followed the foundation of O.S.H.; years in which I learned from the Sisters and taught them, worried and prayed and laughed and played with them; forgot confession appointments and was properly scolded for this and many other misdemeanors; and in my turn scolded the Sisters whenever they gave occasion; which was often. It was I who, along with Bishop Maxon, finally gave them the green light for the Sister's action in 1945. It was I who chalked off the places for the new partitions in their first real convent. And it was I who, in the nature of things, had to bear the chief burden in arranging for their affiliation with the Order of the Holy Cross.

But it was my successors who consolidated that affiliation. Few things have given me such joy as the conscientious and loving care with which Bishop Campbell fostered the young O.S.H., taking it over as he did in its difficult formative period. He allowed me to assist him for the first year as Assistant Superior of O.S.H. (not of O.H.C.). Then I was sent to Africa and, ever since, O.H.C.'s Assistant Superiors have been appointed, with the approval of the Sisters' Council, as Assistant Superiors of O.S.H. as well; Fathers Kroll, Turkington and Atkinson, in that order. Superiors and Assistant Superiors have been equally assiduous. For that matter, so have the other members of O.H.C. as occasion offered. Spontaneously they speak of "our Sisters."

II

Nothing is more boring than a detailed account of one's busy-ness. (It's as bad as recounting one's symptoms.) It is enough to say that I had editorial assignments a year ago which would absorb every minute I could give them for a full twelve months to come.

When, therefore, the Sisters (with the Superior's permission) asked me in April, 1957, to "write a history of the Order of St. Helena," I was baffled. "Of course I can't let them down," said I to myself, "but how on earth shall

I make the time?"

I prayed about it and firmly believe that it was our dear Lord who gave me an inspiration. "Let the Sisters do it themselves. They can do it much better than I can. But don't let them know they are doing it. If I do, they will be as self-conscious and stuffy as the rest of us when writing for publication." So I wrote the Sisters on April 12, 1957, asking them all to send me informal letters not later than November 1, in which they would tell me as fully and freely as they liked their memories and impressions of O.S.H.

Of course I had to secure my "rights" to use their contributions and therefore inserted the following statement: "I shall be free to quote from (your) letter, in whole or in part, if I want to." But then I deliberately covered my tracks by telling them how easily and casually they could jot down their impressions and "just write to (their) hearts' content;" the result being that they forgot my threat about quoting them. The letters vary in length from one to many pages. Each Sister wrote as much or as little as she wished, which was just what I wanted. And you will see for yourself how vivid the "letters" are.

As they arrived, the opening address was excized and the ending; also the date of writing except in Sister Ignatia's opening contribution. Her "Pentecost 1957" does well enough for them all.

Each Sister had been asked for an autobiographical outline at the beginning.

In order that no major topic should be omitted in the otherwise hit or miss arrangement the Sister in authority at the place and time was made primarily responsible for a particular area of the Order's history. But this did not mean that she was confined to this area nor that others could not poach on her preserves. The point is that they were not "her" preserves. The Vow of Poverty as interpreted in our two Orders does not permit us to think of any job as our own. For the sake of convenience and efficiency a particular person is directly responsible for a particular job. But whether it is sweeping a corridor or running a school it is not "my" job but the Order's under God. We are encouraged to pitch in and help each other whenever we can; provided that such help is genuinely helpful (and welcomed) and provided also that we do not give time improperly borrowed from the assignments for which we ourselves are directly responsible. I mention these special assignments to explain why Sister Ignatia has two contributions and why they come first and fourth whereas she is third on the roll. All the other authors are placed in their proper order according to date of profession.

As our publication date approached I became uneasy about the trick which had induced the Sisters to write so naturally and informally; and I sent

again to each of them a mimeographed letter, confessing my wiles and offering to send back for amendment any contribution which might be asked for by its writer. But they all were becomingly docile or, as I would prefer to call them, good sports.

Incidentally, I also sent them, as a group, a Dutch Uncle letter telling them that it would be the height of absurdity to call this a "history of the Order of St. Helena." For O.S.H. as an order is barely out of its cradle and one doesn't write a full-scale biography of a two-year old. To this, too, God bless them, the Sisters were "becomingly docile."

We all want to thank Bishop Moody of Lexington and his staff for putting us in touch with Mr. Burton Milward; and the latter for finding and passing on to us much valuable information about the early days of Margaret Hall School. Also we thank Mrs. Morris Jackson of Versailles for similar generous assistance.

Is there anything more to add about the putting together of this little book? Yes. The Sisters hope we can have illustrations; including my photograph. If this does appear, blame the Sisters.

III

My happiest memories of Versailles are of the times when we sat together, in chapel or elsewhere, and discussed "the wonderful works of God," Let us have one more of those talks.

What then, Sisters, do you want more than anything else in the world? Of course, you want lots of things and very properly so. For example, you want food and drink and sunshine and shelter and health and laughter and interesting, useful work. If it were a little more convenient to have such items in a convent as precious pearl necklaces and Cadillacs, perhaps you would want these, too; and you like ice-cream and strawberry short-cake. All these things are good.

If we dig a bit deeper we come upon larger things that we want; a sense of peace and security, for instance, power and approbation among our fellows, happiness - even holiness. And all these, too, are good. You would be less than human (sub-normal) if you did not want them.

But there is something deeper still, a craving which lies at the bottom of every human heart; and none the less so because most people are completely unaware of it and the rest of us only at times. That deepest craving of all is to love and be loved; to be loved with such infinite love as none but God can give us. In Father Hughson's With Christ In God he has a splendid chapter (IV) on this. He says, for example: "In hardly anything has God's love

for man been more graciously manifested than in His refusal to allow sin to quench the desire of the human heart for the Creator. In this every human soul, whatever its evil heritage or its actual sins, shows that it retains something of the dignity which must attach to the creature made in the image of the Creator."

Nothing has played (and still plays) such havoc in us and in all men as the mistaken but almost universally taken-for-granted notion that what we most want is happiness, interpreted merely as pleasure. What we most want is union with God in love. In heaven that union will be accompanied by undiluted joy. But the joy will be something added; like a bit of frosting which makes a perfect cake better still! It is the cake itself that we crave, union with God; and in this sinful, suffering world that means union with Christ in His Passion. Mind you, you don't have to attain or produce that craving. You and all other men are born with it. St. Augustine knew that, when he cried: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

It helps a lot to be in on this secret about ourselves. It helps a lot, when pain or weariness or humiliation comes in our daily life, to remember: "This is what I want more than anything else in the world. No matter what my feelings may be I know that this bitter experience corresponds with my deepest desire. It is one little chance of having my share of Christ's Passion."

.

OK, then; granted that the deepest craving of every man is to be utterly possessed by Infinite Love (for "God is love") - possessed as literally as a man might be "possessed" by a demon, and far more completely - here is the sixty-four dollar question. Why is it that we are so little aware of this deepest desire of our hearts and perhaps the great majority of men never, in this life, are aware of it at all?

No man can answer that question. What's more, I wonder if God can, in the sense of "understanding" the reason for our sin. For there is no reason. Sin, at its roots at least, is utterly irrational and therefore, in the nature of things, cannot be understood. But the mechanics of sin can be perceived to some extent. Granted our sinful pride, we flee from love because we cannot, or rather will not, be possessed by another; even if that Other is the infinitely tender and loving God. We want to preserve our own "integrity," to be independent. Judas must have considered the possibility of going to meet Christ on His way to Calvary and of shouting aloud, "Jesus, oh Jesus, forgive me!" But he knew what would happen if he did. He knew that Jesus would look at him, not with anger nor even with sorrow but with joy - shining, radiant joy - because Judas, Christ's friend, had come back to Him.

And Judas knew what would happen next. He couldn't look into the eyes of utter love without yielding himself. And that he would not do. Instead he would hurry and hang himself. Granted our pride, we will go through untold terror and torment rather than face and yield ourselves to Infinite Love.

.

An analogy on a more superficial plane is suggestive. We all know, in a general way, what psychologists mean by the repression of the sex-instinct. It is occasioned by a repulsive and deeply terrifying experience which the victim (often erroneously) connects with sex. And the repression itself is a thrusting down, usually automatic and unconscious, of sex into the unconscious. It seems as though that is what all of us have done, as individuals and as a race, with our deep craving for God. I think we may call it a repression, almost, if not quite, in the same sense that psychologists use the word. But it is a repression on a colossal scale. We might term it "the cosmic repression" because it applies not only to some persons but to our whole fallen race and because, also, it involves our craving for the Infinite God. In some weird way we have managed to conceal from ourselves our longing for Him. Or, as the symbolic language of Genesis (3:8) puts it, "Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God." And Francis Thompson in his greatest poem speaks for each one of us: "I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind; . . . I hid from Him." The repression of the sex instinct by some individuals illustrates the fact that a mighty urge of our nature can be held in abeyance.

But it cannot be held in abeyance completely. It will manifest itself in caricature, so to speak, or even by its opposites. A vivid metaphor of this is used very often regarding sex-repression "You cannot keep the energy of sex locked in the basement. It will leap into consciousness through a dozen trap-doors, but in disguise." Thus a person may wrestle all his life with crushes, particular friendships, jealousy; or with prudishness, aloofness, cruelty, etc., etc. - all of them underlaid by fear - without ever knowing that what he really is fighting is an essential urge of his nature.

Just so it is with the still more essential and powerful craving for Infinite Love. Not merely some few individuals but all of us, our entire fallen race, have "repressed" that desire. And because in this case the repression is cosmic, its effects are manifest in art, morals, politics and every other area of our life upon earth.

.

"As a man's god is, so is he." Nothing determines a man's character so emphatically as his idea of God - or the lack of one. So let us glance at a few of the innumerable ways in which, because of "the cosmic repression,"

we have clapped masks on the Face of Love.

The primitive tries to escape by pushing his idea of God, the over-all God, into the background. Often, if not always, there is a vague sense of "Some One" who is far, far away. But for all practical purposes the primitive makes idols for himself; either of good-natured and often comical gods or of diabolically cruel ones. By and large, the gods and goddesses of classic times were amoral. One need not even respect them, let alone love them. In the case of the Old Testament Jews the real God came perilously near breaking through. He did break through in the New Testament. But, for all that, the mass of the Jews rejected Him in both cases, as we Christians have done ever since.

The matter is complicated by the fact that God's supernatural grace has enabled individuals here and there, and even great groups superficially at least, to recognize Him as merciful and loving. Witness, for example, the Psalms and their wide popularity among Jews and Christians alike. Nor is this true of the Jewish-Christian religion only, but of others as well. We must not forget the teaching of orthodox theology that sufficient grace for salvation is offered to every man. And we cannot set bounds to the degree of God's uncovenanted grace. There is sound theological precedent, apart from other grounds, for recognizing great saints among Buddhists and Sufi Mohammedans for example.

Another complication is that before our longing for Infinite Love is released we have to pass through terror. Sinners that we are, we have first to be impressed with the majesty of God, His naked power, before we can with wonder appreciate His love. St. Augustine says that fear is like a needle which pierces a hole for the thread of love to pass through. Just as the symptoms of sex-repression are "underlaid by fear," so is the cosmic repression. I am not now thinking of the manifold anxieties which eat at the surface of our daily lives; nor even of those more poignant but nameless terrors which afflict neurotics; though all these worries and fears are adumbrations of our basic terror. No, I am thinking of that basic terror itself which lies at the next to the deepest level of our hearts; almost, but not quite, as deep as our unconscious craving for union with Love. It is a horror of the unknown, of the universe, of God, of one's very self. And no wonder we are afraid since, in however obscure a way, we have chosen to live our lives as we want to live them, to live them apart from God. No wonder we are afraid since intuitively we are aware that apart from Him we cannot find security. Our fancied self-sufficiency is built on a lie; and deep in our hearts we know it.

All complications aside, however, it is a fact that men still hide themselves from the Face of Love as effectively as any of our ancestors. A simple way is to deny God's existence altogether. Or, if all the phenomena of the universe seem to cry aloud for an "Absolute", we can call Him that. (It is difficult to fall in love with the Absolute!) As a last resort we can lay all

our emphasis on God's transcendence, to all practical intents and purposes denying His presence in our hearts. There are a thousand other devices against being involved in a love affair with God. The most up-to-date, outside the Church and within it, is to deny not God's existence but our own; to consider "self" as a figure of speech, not an entity.

But the old ways still are more popular; to picture God as an amiable idol of small account or, on the other hand, merely a taskmaster. And none are so adept as the Pharisees ancient and modern, the so-called religious leaders; especially monks and nuns. Despite our lip-service of the God of Love it is possible to prefer (unconsciously of course) to think of Him as a Monster Cat waiting to pounce on us; in short, to be guilty of blasphemy.

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We have thought about our deepest desire. And we have considered what we hypothetically termed its repression and a few of the innumerable ways in which that "repression" manifests itself. Now let's think of how the repression can be got rid of and our desire for union with Infinite Love released.

If we were to continue our psychological analogy I think we would find some suggestive parallels between the methods of a human expert and those of the great Psychiatrist.

But the work of our redemption is too manifold to be summed up in psychological formulas. Our cosmic repression can be broken down in one way only; namely, by the finger of God. And the new orientation of our desires involves an ontological change, a change in the order of our being. That we may be radically healed, not only must our sin and our mortality be done away, but our nature must be supernaturalized. There must be, so to speak, a new creation. As St. Paul puts it: "...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

So, for our broader purpose, Sisters, let's turn from psychology to St. Paul:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.... Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.... For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise

reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Christ identified Himself with us in our wretchedness, even unto death; and He enables us (normally through the sacraments) to be identified with Him in the power of His Resurrection. You do not have to begin the process now. It began long ago with your baptism. Already the old man has been "buried" (and, we might say, is disintegrating in the unconscious: our sin our pride, our fears and our repressions have begun, long since, to soften in decay). The radiant new man in Christ has been forming, like a butterfly within the chrysalis, for years; and all that was good in us has begun, long since, to be released. The new man, in other words, is not so much a substitute for the old; but our old personality integrated, transformed and glorified in Christ. It is being re-created. The grace, not only of your baptism but of all the other sacraments you have received, and the grace given you through prayer and "good works," is operating in you. Already it is beginning to manifest itself in faith and hope and love and all the joyful powers of the Resurrection. Already fear is evaporating and being replaced by the fruits of the Spirit. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

It is all very well to realize that the desire for union with God lies at the bottom of every heart; that if it can be released the soul will yield itself to God, that its tensions will be relaxed and that in the sunshine of Divine Love it will unfold like a flower. It is all very well, and of great importance, to remember that God in His great generosity permits us to help Him. Often our simple revelation to another that he wants more than anything else to be loved and to love - to be united to Infinite Love - is the occasion God uses to perform His miracle. But above all we must remember that it is a miracle. We cannot achieve it of ourselves. We do not know what to do; and often it helps more than anything else to acknowledge this to ourselves, lifting that other soul, even as we speak with him, to God in prayer. Perhaps we shall admit our helplessness to that other, also.

"Let us kneel down," we continue, "and say our prayers together." And when we kneel, we remind him and ourself that God surrounds us with His loving presence, that He loves each of us as though each were the only one; and we say the "Our Father" together. It may be weeks or years before the answer comes. Sometimes it comes before the "Our Father" is finished; comes with a joy, a sweet freedom, a release from fear such as that soul has never known.

But whether it be our salvation or another's, it comes from God. Re-creation, like creation, can be accomplished only by the Almighty.

"Behold, I make all things new."

Jesus said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Father Hughson used to tell us how much more "deny himself" means than what is ordinarily signified by "self-denial." It means more than (though it by no means excludes) our small but very requisite mortifications. It means letting go, by God's grace, of self-will, self-dependence, of our very self as conceived of apart from God.

This denial, this "daily" (day by day, moment by moment) whole-hearted fulfilment of duty and acceptance of the painful and humiliating circumstances of one's life, which is only possible for us through prayer and a devout use of the sacraments, is the chief way in which we can co-operate with Christ's work of redemption, our own and others'. And don't let us forget the "whole-hearted." So much depends upon our embracing the cross joyfully. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The more joyfully we accept our crosses, the faster we go.

.

Before we close, let's think of another way of co-operating; namely by stretching our minds to ever expanding and deepening concepts of God. This isn't a temporary expedient. We must continue until our dying day to "stretch our minds."

We shall think of love in a moment, but first and in one sense foremost let us think of fear, an actual horror of the Unknown, of the Monster whom we call God. "Fear him," says our Lord, "which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." There is an element of truth, after all, in those dreadful caricatures we have made of Deity. Even when purified and sweetened by grace, a drop of terror gives tang to the cup of love. For love itself is awe-ful; to yield oneself to be wholly possessed by another. And what shall we say when that Other to whom we yield ourselves is God Almighty! It is indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" - even to "fall in love" with Him. It is true that we cannot think too vividly and intimately of the union which He designs with us. Your soul is His bride. But nothing could be more disastrous than to whittle God down in our minds to the size of a human lover. That way lies naught but sickening sentimentality (or worse).

All our lives through we must be alert to the dangers of just such sentimentality. And God Himself will help us if we turn over and over and over again from simple personal images (the brother, the friend, the father, the mother, the bridegroom) to the thought of God's grandeur, His power, His immensity. God is immanent in all His creation. Think of it; the furthest of the spiral nebulae is as present to Him as this room. Read astronomy, geology, physics. Stretch and cleanse your minds in prayer by thinking of the great impersonal symbols of God; the rivers, the rocks and the stars; the magic of magnetism and electricity; hurricanes, volcanic explosions; the ruth-

less, mountainous waves of a storm at sea.

God is immanent in them all, yet infinitely transcends them. If you were to think for a thousand years with the wisdom of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle combined, your concept of God would be as nothing compared with the Reality. Remember this always. I hate just to leave it with three paragraphs. Never through all eternity will our little minds frame an adequate concept of God. But it is utterly essential, Sisters, that you keep on trying to love Him "with all your mind." It is no human bridegroom to whom you surrender yourself but Pure Spirit. The very wonder of our religion is that it is Deity who loves us.

And now for that other side; His infinite tenderness. My favorite verse in the Bible is I St. John 4:10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." (It is more correct, I am told, to translate the verbs in the present, which makes them all the better: "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loves us.") And do read over again, perhaps often, the second chapter of Hosea. Don't forget what the key words mean. When you come to Baali, say "my Master," and when you come to "Ishi," say "my Husband." Theologians tell us that we may use the bride symbol, here and elsewhere, in three ways. The bride is the Church, or the Blessed Virgin, or the individual soul - your soul.

Slowly but very surely, by sanctifying grace, the deepest craving of your heart is being released; your craving for union with Infinite Love. Feed that desire with the wonder of God's craving for you. Janet Erskine Stuart kept telling her Sisters to "think big thoughts about God," big, generous, kindly thoughts. Be merciful to God. At least give Him credit for being as decent as you are. Suppose, for example, you were married and had a little boy that you loved with all your heart. And suppose he were to do something outrageous that hurt you. And suppose the kid came running and threw his arms around you, crying and saying, "Oh, mummie, mummie, I'm sorry I was bad. I love you, I love you." Wouldn't you forgive him utterly? And wouldn't it break your heart if he moped about it afterwards and refused to believe in your forgiveness? Remember that; when God forgives His small daughter.

The personal pictures are the best and the truest pictures of God; provided we see them against the stupendous background of His majesty.

But there is something better than pictures. There is God made flesh. And "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of

God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We cannot really hide ourselves from Him; outrun the Hound of Heaven. We cannot change the fact that on the Cross He died to win us. You have on the wall of your cell a crucifix, not so? That crucifix is your photograph of Love.

Holy Cross

March 4, 1958

I

Sister Ignatia

Pentecost, 1957

(On the Earliest Days)

Pentecost is the very best time to write about the coming into being of the Order of St. Helena. To put it into words sounds like nothing so much as a gradual psalm in praise of the Holy Spirit. The human and material deficiencies and obstacles would have been insurmountable from the beginning to anyone except the Holy Spirit. And all our hopes and aspirations for the future can be only

That through the ages all along
This may be our endless song:
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For me it seems to have been the gradual working of the Holy Spirit through several generations of both sides of my family and only accidental that it was my good fortune to be the final instrument. As far back as I know, on both sides, all my people were Anglicans and Tories with a deep sense of belonging and of duty to the Church and to the land and of course to their fellows and immediate neighbors and responsibilities, I was born May 3, 1892 in the house on the place in Woodford County, Kentucky, that belonged to my mother and on which her people, the Harts, had lived since the Indians. It was a grant from the crown and was then, or had been, the remote Cherokee area of Fincastle County, Virginia.

The Church was very slow in following the pioneer settlers into the wilderness. The result is that, to this day, the Christian denominations who do not require training and ordination for their ministers are numerically far stronger than the Episcopal Church. My mother told me that when her grandparents - or great-grandparents - were married there were only three thousand white people in Kentucky and they cared enough about being married by a priest to take the journey to Connecticut to be married by Bishop Seabury.

My mother was Susanna Preston Hart. My father's people were also Virginians. His father (they were both Johnson Camden) had been interested in developing the mines and railways in West Virginia and Pennsylvania and it was natural that my father should follow on into Kentucky; especially as, soon after his marriage, he and my mother lived on her farm. She was an only child. On both sides, also, from the settling of the country they had been interested in the government and had occasionally held office.

The Diocese of Lexington divided the state in the middle into East and West. Bishop Burton, who had been rector of a church in Louisville, was the first bishop, and he was much interested in the school for girls at Versailles. Everyone agreed that the school was a good idea, but it devolved upon members of the Diocese who were able, to make up the annual deficit. My father was among them.

My first memory of the school is that one autumn day found two very shy little country girls, sitting in the sun on the cottage steps. The cottage was then, as it is now, the lower school and they had just been entered. One was Mattie Cary, who later became assistant principal and, later still, Mrs. Gentry McCauley. The other was I. We soon were fast friends, and are still today.

I think my family was relieved that I could go to a Church school, close to home, and it would not be necessary to have a governess in the house, which had been the custom in the past for families living in the county. Both the school and the parish church were within two miles of our house and were very much a part of our daily life. I rode to school and back on my pony, which was safe because there were then no automobiles on the road; and there was generally turf or a bridle path on the road sides, so it didn't hurt the horse's feet. I was very much interested but my interest was (and has remained) in my pony rather than in things academic. I never learned how to study and I never liked school.

There were lots of books in our house; books up to the ceiling in the "book room" (I think that "library" would have been considered too ambitious a word to use) and books on shelves all over the house and finally books in cases in the basement. I think my mother and my father both inherited or were given them. I don't remember learning to read or when I didn't love to read anything. My mother never told me I couldn't read a book but wisely kept me supplied with what she did want me to read. I have a jumbled memory of Greek myths and plays and fairy tales and Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare which I read over and over; and of history chiefly in the form of lives of heroes. I don't remember any saints' lives and Bible stories were rather on the dull side. But of all the books I remember the way they smelled and the pleasant livableness of the rooms whose walls they lined rather than anything that was in them. My interest was more and more in horses and riding and fox hunting.

I suppose no one ever had a happier or more normal childhood. My parents loved me and wanted me and I loved them and my grandmother who lived with us and my little sister and life on the farm. After them, the people I loved most and who most influenced me in those days were my nurse, Aunt Sally, who had been a slave, and a few of the other negroes and Uncle Haggin who gave me my favorite pony. They told me stories about when they were little and I knew and loved them as people long before I knew anything of racial or social distinctions. "Uncle Haggin" was the grandson of a Turkish doctor, a political refugee in London. He had gone in a sailing vessel to California in '49 and had later owned the Anaconda Copper mines and Cerro de Pasco mines in Peru. He was not my uncle but had married my cousin, who had been born in our house and grew up like a sister of my mother; and when I first grew up I was with them a good deal in New York and Newport. And it was he who with my father helped carry the school (until then, Ashland Seminary) in Kentucky. One time, in a burst of gratitude, the Bishop changed its name to "Margaret Hall" (Margaret was Mrs. Haggin's name) without saying anything to her about it. I don't think she was at all pleased.

Toward the end of that golden age I remember one autumn day walking through the woods kicking dry leaves. I was between my mother and a friend of hers, holding a hand of each, and they were talking about St. Thomas Aquinas. He was one of the dusty ones in Latin up near the ceiling and Cordie, the friend who had never been to school in her life because she was born right after the war on a plantation in Louisiana and had only been taught by her father at home, could read St. Thomas so easily in Latin that she could put it in English as she went along. They had been reading and were talking about angels on the point of a needle. There was a pause and I was so interested that I had forgotten my shyness and said, "Mother, I don't believe in angels or fairies or anything that has wings except chickens." They laughed at me so that it underscored what I was already beginning to realize - that if I really wanted to hear what grown up people were talking about I had better keep quiet.

Soon after that, in the Christmas holidays, our home burned with everything in it. I remember the great yellow flame licking around the back piazza to the second story and the cold drive with Aunt Sally and the baby to my aunt's house. Aunt Sally took off her cloak to put around the baby. In a few days she was ill with pneumonia. I was taken to see her but she couldn't speak to me because she was so ill and I couldn't speak to her because of a strange new ache and weight inside me. So I just sat there and held her hand until somebody came and took me back to my aunt's. In a few days I went to her burial. No one ever filled her place, I think, in the lives of any of us. Often, since we have been working through desegregation at the school, I have felt that the little I could do was also the least I could do in memory of the negroes I had loved so much and who had once been so much part of my life.

When the excitement over the fire subsided I realized with relief that all my school books had burned up. But it was only momentary relief and I knew instantly that it was selfish and that something terrible that I didn't begin to understand had happened to my family. My mother said she was never going to let herself care about things any more. I think she never did.

So the golden age came to an end and the slow eclipse which was finally to cover the whole earth for everybody began for me.

The school must have been very poor but I could doubtless have learned something if I had tried. As it was I learned nothing; and in 1907, when I was fifteen, I was sent to Milton Academy where I went to school for three years. I loved Milton but I loathed school and I still don't see how they stood me. I was strong and hard and selfish and ambitious and glad when I was eighteen and didn't have to go to school any more. My father was increasingly absorbed in the property in Eastern Kentucky, in his stable and in politics. My mother had severe migraine headaches and spent a good deal of time in England and on the continent, where she had been educated, and I often went with her.

In 1914 the first war came and I had a long, severe - almost fatal - illness. The doctors never discovered the cause. In the course of it and of my recovery the things I thought about and felt were limited only by my capacity to think and to feel. I did a good bit of travelling of a superficial kind and I had a number of pleasant and interesting acquaintances and among them some real friends. It was as though I had gone through a long tunnel and had come out a stranger in another land, unspeakably tired and never to be really strong again.

Meantime the school struggled on. It had two able and self-sacrificing heads: the Reverend James (later Bishop) Maxon, who was also Rector of the parish, and Charlotte Forsyth, later Sister Benedicta O.S.A., who soon left us and became a Roman Catholic.

I had known a few Roman Catholic religious. I was ignorant, impatient and intolerant and I felt that a strong religious order would be an immediate source of strength and vitality to the whole diocese. At first everyone to whom I mentioned it was opposed to the idea. Finally my father said that if I could get an order to take it he would help. Bishop Burton said he didn't want religious in his diocese but finally agreed rather than let the school go, which it seemed to be doing. About that time the Roman Catholic Bishop of Covington was dining at our house and said he was just waiting to buy it. I was annoyed but I laughed and said he might have to wait a good while.

Next the rector of the parish said he didn't want Sisters. The parish itself was sleepy and could have been any of the ones we read about in the country in England at the time of the Oxford revival. I had no difficulty in

getting most of the parish to sign a paper saying they did want religious. I am ashamed of myself when I think about the way I did it.

The question then was to find an order that would take it. We asked St. Mary's, St. John Baptist and the Transfiguration. The last said they would but then changed their mind.

About that time I was on a cruise in the Carribean. I knew the Order of St. Anne had a house in St. Thomas so while we were in port I walked up to call at the Convent and asked Mother Rose if there was any chance that they might be interested. She said she thought there was but I would have to ask Father Powell in Boston. So that spring I went to see Father Powell and he accepted.

On my return to Kentucky Bishop Burton had changed his mind and it was all off. But Bishop Burton died and Bishop Abbott succeeded him. Then the current principal stamped her foot and cried and resigned for the nth time and I, for the nth time, suggested to the trustees, who were pretty fed up, that they ask an order to take the school. Bishop Abbott said he would be glad to have the Order of St. Anne and Father Powell said they might come, but it was too late to assemble a staff for that autumn and the school in consequence was closed for a fateful year. First the depression came. My father had heavy losses and said that, instead of clearing the entire mortgage, he could only pay half at that time. So the Sisters began with a debt, I think of over \$50,000 - and in the depression. Next, the person who was to have been principal, a Catholic and head of a school in New England and a friend of the Order, died. The school was her residuary legatee but the legacy was only some books and we had a hard time paying the express on them when they came. The Mother Superior O.S.A. said there was no money to employ a principal so she would be principal herself. She had no professional qualifications in that field but she had the assurance of a successful business woman and a massive Scandinavian quiet and imperturbability; and everybody loved her and trusted her.

I was deeply sensible of my responsibility for the Sisters being there and did everything I could to help them in any way. I was living alone and without any serious occupation; planning, after the shooting season in this country, to visit friends in London and to go with them to the Balearic Isles; a pleasant but altogether selfish project.

The Sisters' circumstances were so hard and so precarious and they so needed help that the thought of leaving them made me uncomfortable. I had a justifiably low opinion of my own value and if it had not been for their insecure and, as it later became, desperate situation it might never have occurred to me to make the suggestion I did. One day I said to Mother Louise, "Why don't you just take me?" The next week I moved in and was received as a postulant. I would quite as willingly have made life vows. I had never

looked at the Rule; and knew almost nothing about the religious life, which I had always idealized. Once, on a rainy week-end in Luzern, I had read a Tauchnitz copy of St. Benedict's Rule and that was the extent of my knowledge. I had no practical education or training of any kind and I admired artlessly and from a distance those who had. I was in the late thirties and felt that, for me, life was finished. I was grateful to be allowed to be of service in any way that I could to the Sisters.

When I was a postulant the first things that were needed were pupils and money, so I went wholeheartedly but not very successfully into that. All the Sisters knew how to do something. I didn't know how to do anything so I tried on my own initiative to fill in the gaps. I enjoyed doing it and I was a little amused at the beginning.

Slowly I began to realize that the situation was serious. The school got off to a fairly good start; a small succes d'estime thanks chiefly to the few people who were inclined to support our effort. But the second year there was a great decrease in pupils.

Sister Rachel had left Smith College to come into the Community in Boston and as soon as she was junior professed was sent to Kentucky. Her mind was more disciplined and better trained than mine but we had strong common tastes and interests; among them social problems and psychiatry. (I had been a member of the first Smith College summer school class in psychiatric social service.) We often did not agree as to method in application but I always supported her as strongly as I was able. However much we disagreed in private, we always presented a united front.

Not for many years did I realize how unwelcome my entrance into the Community must have been both to Sister Jeannette and to Sister Rachel and see the picture as it must have appeared to them. I was older than either of them; I knew nothing of the religious life; I had little comprehension of charity and none of holy obedience. Poverty - detachment - I did know, but it was of an immaterial nature that I did not care to talk about. It must have been hard for them to accept from me what in their eyes may have seemed a great deal but to me was only a fragment and of little worth. I was glad to move into the atmosphere of a religious house. From the moment of my entrance into the Community until I was taken out of office I had the full responsibility of a professed (and senior) Sister.

From the beginning the going was hard but I enjoyed weathering crisis after crisis in both the Community and the school and found it as exhilarating as an unfamiliar steeple-chase course. We never knew whether we would make it or not - and the odds were all against it.

The details of our early difficulties belong to the history of the Order of St. Anne rather than to the Order of St. Helena; so, interesting though they

were, they must be omitted. However, the school began to build up under Sister Rachel; and we were helped generously by Mr. Haupt, the administrator of the Haggin Trust. I had studied all I could of the religious life, especially in the works of St. Teresa and St. Francis de Sales, and had talked with Mother Beatrice and Mother Olivia C. T. and with Mother Mary Veronica of the Poor Clares. Occasionally I had written Father Hughson of the Order of the Holy Cross and was always helped by his clear, quick thinking and by his courage. And his questions helped me to think.

Soon after Father Gavin died Father Whittemore O.H.C. became our Warden. From time to time he had other members of Holy Cross visit us. Those visits were unfailingly helpful and stimulating and steadying to us all. The first time Father Baldwin was there I thought there couldn't be two people more different than Father Baldwin and Father Whittemore; and yet they were alike in some way and I wondered what it could be. They were both blond and they had the same hair cut. Perhaps the same hand had done them both; but it was more, I thought, than just topiary. That amused me but I kept on thinking. Finally I thought it must be that they both - and all the others - lived by the same Rule. When we got out of chapel I asked Father Baldwin if I might borrow his Rule to read. He demurred but let me have it, and I was absorbed several days in studying it. One afternoon as I was reading it I suddenly saw, as vividly as we see things in a flash of lightning on a dark night, that that was the Rule we should live by - that we were going to live by. I wrote on a piece of paper, "This is the Rule we should be living by," and gave it to Sister Rachel who was resting in the next cell. On Father Whittemore's next visit I said it to him. He seemed startled and not at all enthusiastic. But I could see nothing else. It was so obvious that we would that I wanted to immediately. Father Whittemore said for me to quit talking about it and told me how our own Rule was shot through with all sorts of beautiful things. Nevertheless, I never doubted that we would adopt the Holy Cross Rule some day; but I did not see all the obstacles between; or what a monumental task it would be to change a whole Community from one Rule to another. When it finally happened it seemed to me as though it were a rehearsal of an event that had occurred long before.

II

Sister Jeannette

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 10, 1901.

Father, Winthrop Smith Sterling. (He was a musician and was dean of his own small college of music.)

Mother, Emma Mabel Sterling (nee, Ward) born in Canada of British parents. They met in Germany where both were studying music. Incidentally, their story would make interesting reading.

I have a brother, Ward, twelve years older than I; a sister, Louise, nine years older and another, Barbara, three years older.

I am one of the very few Sisters who began life as an Anglican. (My father was half Quaker. Mother converted him before she married him!) I was brought up in the "Catholic" brand in St. Luke's, Cincinnati, then the only one of its kind in the state. Father Frank Gavin and Father Joseph O.S.F. are two of the many priests who "battled" and endured episcopal displeasure and "inhibitings." My father was always senior warden.

I came into the Order of St. Anne in September, 1917. (I became seventeen in November.) Two years in high school - no jobs. Two years, while still in high school, in the Art Academy of Cincinnati connected with the museum. Had studied piano, of course. Father Gavin suggested to my parents that Barbara and I go to the Foxboro Convent of the Order of St. Anne and help on their farm - "farmeretting." That was how I ended up in O.S.A.; though I had felt in myself for several years that I would be a Religious.

I was clothed on June 23, 1918, Junior Professed in 1920 and went that summer to help found a house in the Virgin Islands. Finally professed on January 27, 1926. (The Rule forbade final vows before the age of twenty-five.)

In 1930 the Order of St. Anne was asked to found a house in the little town of Versailles, Kentucky, and take over the management of the diocesan school for girls which had been closed temporarily for lack of funds and students.

In the Order of St. Anne it is the custom to found autonomous houses, each convent having its own Mother Superior and governing itself. Sister Louise was appointed by the Warden of the Order of St. Anne in Boston to head the little group of Sisters to be sent on this new venture of faith. "Venture of faith" proved to be more than just a figure of speech, because the 1931 depression swooped down on the people who had hoped to help and, of course, on the families of prospective pupils; so we arrived to find ourselves financially in a bad way.

Mother Louise with three or four Sisters left for Kentucky in the early summer of '31 to prepare living quarters. Sister Rachel and I were to join them when Sister Rachel had finished some courses in summer school. (I think there wasn't a college degree amongst us and no one of us had been prepared for a teaching career!)

Our journey has become history. We arrived one mid-morning in Lexington and presented Mother Louise, who met us, with three cents; all we had left. We had had no breakfast. In Washington, finding we had several hours between trains, we had thought it a fine idea to go and view the National Cathedral which neither of us had seen. A taxi was hailed and the Italian driver, when questioned if he could take us for a certain sum, assured us, oh yes, he could take us for that - not far - but didn't we want to stop on the way at a certain Franciscan Church which, it was implied, was much better than the Cathedral? The flow of broken English (more broken than necessary, we realized later) soared into the heights of rapturous description until we were deposited at this church. We saw it - purgatorial flames, imitation catcombs, and all! The driver, all solicitude, said we must not walk in the rain; he would wait.

Inside, the cathedral seemed full of noisy tourists. We asked a gentleman in a verger's gown if there was some place where we might pray. His voice dropped to a bewildered whisper. "Oh, pray?" He went off and returned with some clanking keys. We were led in silence to an unfinished chapel. There was a leak somewhere and there were pools of water on the floor. He unlocked the wrought iron gates and clanked them to behind the Sisters.

When we finally returned to town the driver claimed an astronomical fee, of course. We, young in the ways of the world, exclaimed in horror, "Oh, but you said - - - !" The driver excitedly claimed all manner of invalid dependents. We said we didn't have that much. Hastily extracting a small amount for a mere bite of supper we handed him the rest. So dearly is experience bought!

I remember the excitement I felt as we drove up to the big red brick building of the school. The appearance of the inside failed to dampen our spirits, though the picture of brown walls and woodwork, of the large cabbage like red roses on the dining room wall-paper and the shabby mission furniture is indelibly fixed in our minds. Almost the first thing that was done was to apply white paint on the walls and woodwork. Trying to find our way around the building in the dark and revolving around with a revolving bookcase in the study hall, under the impression that it was a door, also is a well remembered experience.

Offices were said in a little impromptu chapel set up in one of the bedrooms. We attended Holy Communion at the village church, for the rector at that time acted as our chaplain. Later a chapel was fixed up in a large basement room. At the present writing it is necessary to conduct morning chapel in three shifts as the girls cannot all get into this little makeshift chapel at one time.

We started with sixteen girls that first year. It was owing to the generosity of Mr. Johnson Camden, whose daughter, Sister Ignatia, had joined the Order that first year, that the school was able to carry on.

In 1934 Mother Louise was recalled to Boston, two Sisters were invalided home and one left, leaving five Sisters to carry on. I, being the oldest in the Religious life, was made Mother.

Sister Rachel, who by this time had received her B.A. degree, became principal of the school. She had had some courses at the University of Kentucky and was sent to Boston University to finish the work necessary for a degree.

The school carried a heavy mortgage when the Sisters took it over, but after four years the buildings and property were deeded to us.

Father Frank Gavin, of the General Theological Seminary, gave us much guidance and help between the years 1934 and 1938. We might say that he kept us going spiritually through those difficult years. We owe him more than we can say.

On his sudden death in 1938 we asked Father Whittemore, O.H.C. if he would undertake the wardenship. His friendship for Father Gavin led him to accept the task of guiding and advising this little group of inexperienced Sisters. We felt God was very good to us to permit us to have this direction.



Margaret Hall
School, Versailles;
Cradle of O.S.H.



Chapel of
Margaret Hall
School

First Convent of
St. Helena;
Versailles





Habits in Probation Period



Convent Chapel; Versailles

New White Habits, 1947



III

Sister Rachel

I was born in Everett, Massachusetts, on May 15, 1908. My parents are Calvin Hosmer and Charlotte Wilson Hosmer. I have one brother five years older than I and two kid brothers four and six years younger, all of whom I love dearly. I was brought up without religious affiliation. My mother had been an Episcopalian but my father was opposed to religion in any form and we all ended up going nowhere.

I found my way back to the Episcopal Church when I was 13 or 14, on Easter Day. It seemed to me that the thing to do was to go to church on Easter so I talked with my mother about it. I suggested the Episcopal Church and she told me then that she used to be an Episcopalian and let me take her Prayer Book to church with me. It had on it, I remember, a linen cover she had embroidered. The service was a Mass, the first I had ever attended. I knew nothing whatever about what was going on but the love and reverence of the priest and the congregation, and the overwhelming conviction that up there at the altar was something utterly holy and infinitely desirable, made such a deep impression on me that I never again missed a Sunday service in the Episcopal Church unless I was physically unable to go. I was confirmed in 1924.

Shortly after my confirmation I encountered another sacrament in a similar blind way. I happened to enter the Church of St. John the Evangelist one day, saw the statues, lights, etc., and concluded: "Roman Catholic." Then I saw the Book of Common Prayer in the pews and reconsidered. "Must be one of those high churches I've heard about." Confessionals stood in the corners; and in the tract rack there were pamphlets about confession. I took some of them home with me, and was convinced; confession was indicated for me. I went back to the church for Evensong and after the service I hailed the nearest priest. "Do you hear confessions of people who are not members of your parish?" I asked. The priest turned, replied, "I'll hear your confession

next Thursday at 4:30," and disappeared. No instruction, no explanation, just an appointment.

Somehow I made it, that first confession, next Thursday at 4:30. Afterwards I was introduced to one of the Sisters of St. Anne. She had on long, long skirts and her face was almost lost inside her veil and hood. She was very modest and quiet and proper. I was fascinated and repelled at the same time and in the back of my mind and heart there came a faint unacknowledged something linking me myself to this strange thing called "The Religious Life."

It was after this that I boned my parents into letting me transfer from The Girls Latin School in Boston, where I was preparing for Smith College, to St. Mary's School, Peekskill, New York. I was graduated in 1926 and entered college the next September. By then I had decided I wanted to be a great artist and tried to get my parents to let me go to Art School instead. They insisted on one year at Smith but agreed to let me change if I still wanted to after the year was over. So in 1927 I entered the Boston Museum School of the Fine Arts. In February I told my parents of my intention of trying my vocation with the Sisters of St. Anne in Boston; and I entered the convent on August 14, 1928. I was clothed as a novice on November 21. In 1930 I was sent back to school, to Boston University, for my sophomore year of college. I was junior professed on February 1, 1931, and at the end of the summer I was sent with Sister Jeannette and three others to make a new foundation at Versailles, Kentucky. We were to establish the Order in Kentucky and take over a boarding school for girls, Margaret Hall School, which had been closed for a year. I went to the University of Kentucky that first year and did some teaching in Versailles as well. The following year I was sent back east to finish my college work. I was stationed not in Boston but at Arlington Heights and taught Latin and Art at the school there. I was graduated from Boston University in 1933 and returned to Kentucky to teach at Margaret Hall School. I was life professed on July 26, 1935.

Before I tackle my special assignment I want to record a few impressions and memories of our early days in Kentucky. Sister Jeannette has I trust, described our memorable journey and our penniless and breakfastless arrival. I remember well my first sight of the school building. A narrow, cracked concrete walk led up to a wooden porch. The building itself was brick, rather like a factory, and covered with Virginia Creeper. An old stump served as a prop for a vigorous trumpet vine on one side of the front walk and beyond it some children were swinging. They hailed us, stopped swinging and ran to meet and greet us. Their faces were dirty and happy.

Inside the house reeked of wet glue and whitewash. Mother Louise, who had arrived earlier in the summer, had determined to brighten the place up a bit and had had the dark brown wallpaper covered with stable wash. Having no money, as well as no faculty, student body, nor experience in teaching or administering girls' schools (or any kind of schools) we were blissfully igno-

rant and could happily use our ingenuity to get things going. We knew nothing of state educational requirements, fire laws, curriculum construction, etc. Before our first term started, Miss Helen Ward, who did know, and who was to have been our first head mistress, died and we had to find someone to take her place.

For a convent we had rather tenuous arrangements. We fixed up an oratory where we could say offices in one of the students' bedrooms, number 3 on the second floor. An old bookcase with square bronze candlesticks served as an altar and we set rows of chairs facing each other for a choir. The Sisters' cells were six rooms, three on each side of a much larger room over the gymnasium. Mother Louise slept in a bedroom on the second floor so as to be with the children.

Our first postulant was Miss Tevis Camden. She was 37 years old, tall, dark and wholly unaccustomed to a life like ours. She tackled it gamely, however, in her one little gray cotton postulant's dress (she used to wash it out at night in the shower, squatting, as she said, like Gandhi to do so, and wear it unironed but clean the next day), her nun's shoes and her disciplined way of walking and sitting.

It was not until after I had returned from Boston after finishing at Boston University that Sister Ignatia and I began to talk together from time to time in the classroom which I used for Latin and History. We sat side by side on the yellow varnished cane-bottomed classroom chairs, talking, arguing, questioning, criticizing, planning. We came to refer to these sessions as "sitting on the musical chairs," and to this day "the musical chairs" are a symbol of the curious kind of relationship into which we entered and which still persists in spite of many vicissitudes.

We are very different. Sister Ignatia is the older of two girls, from a prominent Southern family, widely-travelled and socially experienced. She has, like most older children, a natural tendency towards conservatism. But this tendency is only surface and applies chiefly to things like social behaviour, cooking and personal neatness. Perhaps it also accounts for her talent for perseverance and for conserving values and relationships. Philosophically and aesthetically the story is quite different. Her tastes are by no means conservative, either in ideas or in artistic taste. She is great on long-range schemes and on a large scale. I am a Yankee, the second child in a sea of brothers, and have a natural bent towards revolution and reform. I am good at criticizing and resisting. Both of us are stubborn. I remember her once admonishing me that she had seen in a Canadian forest the skulls and antlers of two inextricably engaged caribou. They had got into mortal combat and since neither could nor would back up they died there. She was afraid we two would end up in a similar fix. She also used to get after me for being against things, especially when I didn't go along with her. "Say what you are for; don't keep saying what you're against," she would say. I

am unable to proceed with a grand scheme until I see what steps are going to lead up to it - connect with it from here to there. I cannot and will not embark upon it until I do see. There might be some skullduggery somewhere. To Sister Ignatia this looks like lack of trust. Maybe it is. I don't know.

Both of us are idealists and have some capacity for adventure and risk. Both of us were, and I hope are, in dead earnest about the Religious Life; and we soon began to formulate plans for improving things. (This from a novice and a junior professed!) I think our first "reform," and it turned out to be a revolution, was to promote the idea of a "corridor Sister" for the older girls. They had had the third floor to themselves and, as might be imagined, they tended more and more to disorderly rooms, unmade beds and midnight parties. So a Sister was assigned to the small bedroom at the head of the stairs and some effort was made to teach the kids more orderly ways.

We were constantly poor and the building needed paint, paper, major repairs and decent equipment of every kind. Sister Ignatia and I were asked to go on a begging tour to see if we could raise some money. We worked out our itinerary, including Tennessee and Georgia, New York and Louisville. We were hopeless beggars and failed to bring back even enough money to cover our expenses.

Shortly after this our Reverend Mother was transferred and we were left with one life professed, Sister Jeannette, two junior professed, Sister Ignatia and me, and a couple of novices. Sister Jeannette was made Superior by the Warden, Father Powell, S.S.J.E., the founder of the Order of Saint Anne.

The next act concerns the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Abbott. Also, we met Father Whittemore and managed to involve him in our affairs.

The "Bishop's Row" was a dreadful business. I will not go into the details. With the departure of Mother Louise in November, 1934, I became Principal of Margaret Hall School. I learned how to do the job in the most effective possible way by discovering what happens when you do it wrong. One of my worst mistakes was the way I handled a serious crush situation between two girls. By my lack of skill and experience and wisdom and humility I ended by bringing upon us all the wrath of Bishop Abbott.

Sister Ignatia and I were sent by Mother Jeannette to New York post-haste to see Father Frank Gavin. He had given a Bluegrass Conference at the school the year before and we had come to love and trust him in a special way. We wrote him our story and asked if we might come to him for help and advice.

I remember how he looked when we entered 2 Chelsea Square that winter afternoon in 1937. He was sitting on a chair too small for him and my special delivery letter was sticking out of his back pocket. He had gathered round him a couple of his old seminary classmates, both of whom had turned into

Religious Superiors. One was Father Joseph, Founder and Superior of the Franciscans. I said I wanted to make my confession before we did anything else, so he took me off to a classroom for the sacrament of penance. Then we rejoined the group. The third man was Father Whittemore, the new Superior of O.H.C. He made on that occasion two memorable remarks. The first was: "One thing is as plain as a pikestaff. You've got to stick it out down there, for the honour of the Religious Life!" Later in the conversation, when things were sort of quiet, he said, "I've never been to your convent in Versailles. I'd like to go down and see what it's like. Will you invite me sometime?" We jumped at the chance and he promised to come.

In the end, after a year of going in a chartered bus to Mass in Frankfort or Lexington, our advisors, and I think chiefly Father Whittemore, somehow managed to get things sufficiently smoothed out so that Father Irving Spencer (who had agreed to come to us as chaplain even without a licence but was given a licence by the Bishop) arrived and our relations with the Diocesan became more nearly normal.

Father Powell, our Warden, died in 1938. Father Frank Gavin was elected to succeed him but died a few months later. We then elected Father Whittemore. He wrote that he thought Father Frank would have liked him to accept, so he would, but on condition that the arrangement was to be temporary - until we found someone who could do it better.

Sister Jeannette's term of office expired in 1938. At the Greater Chapter to elect a new Superior no one received a majority. After four ballots we asked the Warden to appoint a Superior. He appointed me by letter. I had left Versailles immediately after Chapter and was at home with my mother for a two weeks' visit when the news came from Versailles. It was a telegram from Sister Ignatia. The telephone rang and my mother answered it. I could hear the puzzled Yankee voice of the man in the station who takes telegrams dictating, "We kiss your ring," to my equally puzzled mother. As she gave it to me she said, "This doesn't mean you're going to be the Mother, does it?" I was quite unprepared for such an outcome but that was what it meant. I was installed on September 8 by Father Austin, who acted as the Warden's representative.

Things began to change when the new Warden got into action. He made us regular visits, heard our confessions, counselled the Sisters and faculty and began, perhaps in spite of himself, to give a firmer framework of prayer and discipline to our corporate life and to share with us some of the spirit of his own community.

We had started to publish a quarterly (Pro Eis) at the suggestion of Father Gavin during his brief term as Warden. He did not live to see an issue and the second one was dedicated to his memory.

The community began to grow, more Associates were enrolled and Sister Josephine established the Guild of St. John the Divine for the children. It originally combined two functions Altar guild work and work for missions, etc. It was eventually divided into two groups and each survives and plays an important part in the life of the school.

The Frank Gavin Memorial Scholarship was set up in memory of Father Frank to be given to a refugee child from Germany. We thought it suitable to do something for a Jewish child, in his name, because of his deep love for the Jewish people and his profound learning in the field of Hebrew scholarship.

Luisse Geng was finally brought to the school after many delays and difficulties. She was the daughter of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. The Nazis would not permit her to go to school. We got her out of Germany two days before the war broke out in 1939. She went first to England and had a long wait there while we dickered with U.S. officials about her entry. Finally it was my Republican mother who suggested that we write to Mrs. Roosevelt. I did so and the wheels turned. Luisse arrived, was duly graduated in 1941 and sent to college. She was graduated from Smith with honours in 1945. Meanwhile she had had desperate news from her mother and, in response, we tried to rescue her but could not. Mrs. Geng meanwhile was sent to a concentration camp, as we learned after the war, and waited her turn at the cremation ovens.

Luisse entered Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, certain that she would never see her mother again. But after the war Mrs. Geng was liberated by the Russians, from Teresienstadt, and we were able then to bring her over. She was with me at Luisse's graduation from Medical School. She is a tiny woman with bright blue eyes and pink cheeks. She looked up at me during the exercises and said, "I am thinking of the highest day of my life and the lowest. This is the highest." I asked what was the lowest. "When the S.S. men took me down those stairs," she said.

Luisse had accepted the Sisters as her mothers and our relationship with her was always a happy one. When she comes back to visit she still makes a point of having a little talk with each of the Sisters she knew as a school girl.

To return to our community chronicle: The records show that we were beginning to work on our house rule and to amend it in the direction of more silence, more prayer and more regularity of life. Visits to seculars except during the yearly rest with one's family and close friends were prohibited, Novices were required to stay within the convent grounds and the silence was extended.

In 1940 we first began our plan for a new chapel. Sister Jeannette's

brother, Mr. Ward Sterling, was asked to make plans for it.

Dr. and Mrs. Lucas Underwood, refugees from Nazi Germany, were added to the staff in 1939 and stayed with us for seven years. They were the first of a long series of foreign teachers, from Poland, Finland, Yugoslavia, Holland, who were for one reason or another "displaced persons" and to whom we gave work. In their turn they greatly enriched the school with their skill and learning. Most of them were musicians and of Jewish background.

In January, 1941, Father Whittemore made us his first long visit. Some of us - Sister Ignatia and I chiefly - had asked him to help us about the fundamentals of the Religious Life; and he had promised to give us a series of conferences on the Rule. I well remember his first address, given in my office at school. He began by saying that the Religious Life has the same objective as that of Christians in the world. He stressed over and over the importance of the goal, union with God, and the diversity of the means used to get there. While it is of the utmost moment to keep one's Rule faithfully, whatever it may be, the difference between the Rules of the various communities are of secondary significance.

I see now how right Father Whittemore was. Whatever religious order we belong to and whether or not its outward observations are extraordinarily strict, it is through joyful adherence to them and through generous sympathy with all our Sisters, especially those with whom we sometimes disagree, that God draws us to closer union with himself and with one another. At the moment, however, I was terribly disappointed. I was convinced that what we needed was more prayer, more silence, more definite rules and more monastic deportment. I was utterly deflated and let down by that first address. I think he saw it in my face, for afterwards he asked me what I thought of it. I don't remember what I said but I do remember going to chapel and thrashing it out alone before the altar.

I had tried my way - we had more rules and more silence - and it had not made the Sisters happier or more loving. I couldn't dodge his reasoning: that all the trappings in the world are worth nothing without love. I hated the whole approach Father Whittemore was offering. It seemed to strengthen those very tendencies in the community which I thought were doing the greatest damage. But I had a clear choice of pushing ahead in my own self-chosen path or following a lead from our Warden, who had far more experience than we and whom we had asked to direct us. So I tried to swing all my powers over behind him and do it and see it his way. Slow though I was on the up-take, it was a real turning point and I have never been sorry; nor have I ever, consciously at least, turned back.

At the end of that conference on the Rule I felt as if I were in the Upper Room, so strong was the power of the Holy Ghost. I remember hanging on hard to the arm of the green velvet couch so as not to be blown off! There

are few things I appreciate more than what Father Whittemore did for us during those days.

Thereafter we made a new start as a community and tried to put first, not observances and rules but mutual love, mercy and generosity. It did not entail laxity, as I had feared; on the contrary, we grew in the very things I had longed for, and in ways I had not dreamed of.

Father Whittemore urged us to build a separate convent for the Sisters' home, from which they could go out to do their work each day. It was four years before we accomplished this.

An intermediate step was the redesigning of the rooms over the gymnasium into a sort of convent which was enclosed, and had its own common room and library.

Our active work was growing. We began to use the school for summer conferences and retreats for young people; and to take outside speaking engagements as well as to try to develop and build up the school. The Margaret Voorhies Haggin Trust made us a grant of \$25,000, our first big gift, which we used for extensive repairs and renovations to our school buildings. Mrs. Haggin gave the original building and the Haggin Trust and its trustee, Mr. William Haupt, have helped us greatly through the years. We could not have gone on without this help.

The annual reports to chapter during these years record many special efforts of prayer - a novena of thanksgiving after Father Whittemore's visit and conferences on the Rule; a fast of reparation for the sin of war on the day we declared war on Japan; a novena of reparation for the sufferings of the Jews; another for the deepening of the spiritual life of the school. They also record various efforts to work with the coloured people in Versailles.

We had a joint committee, composed of students from the Simmons Street School and our girls, to plan war work and we had some exchange of entertainment with them and gave a party for coloured children at Christmas.

In 1942 the seed of what became an annual conference week was sowed. We had a panel discussion of "Religion and Science" and "Religion and the Social Studies" for the American Association of University Women. Conference Week is a development of this idea for in it we try each year to draw out for the children the social implications of the faith. The first one was on the famous "Ten Peace Points," the next on "The Four Freedoms". We have had weeks of study on Japan, China and Africa and on the Social Implications of the Eucharist, the Family, etc.

In July 1942 I was re-elected for a new term of office as Superior and was installed by the Warden.

This also was our first year of self-help. We had learned about the philosophy of self-help first from Father Chalmers, then Headmaster of Kent School, when he was with us for a young people's conference and retreat. He asked why we didn't have self-help - "it seems so much more in keeping with your Rule." We learned all we could of it from him and he arranged to bring his prefects down to meet with our prefects and help them set up the plan in our school. This project gave self-help a good send-off and we began with enthusiasm. The plan worked very well except for one group of girls who wouldn't do their part and had in the end to be dropped from school. Since then self-help has been an integral part of the life at school and has developed into a form very much like the Kent plan but with some characteristics of its own.

Father Whittemore conducted our community retreat this year and led us further along the way he had pointed out to us in his conferences on our Rule.

In 1944 Rosemary Reid came to us as assistant in the music department. She was taken ill with some form of encephalitis and died the following June 5th in a hospital in Cincinnati. According to her wishes her body was cremated and the ashes buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Boston.

Sister Jeannette spent a year with the Sisters in Chicago, working at the Art Institute there towards her degree.

Father Ciriot was our chaplain at this time and gave us a course of twenty lectures on the New Testament.

Another high spot was our first Faculty Follies. Mrs. Emily Hopkins, the Assistant Principal, and Dr. Lucas Underwood were the stars in the memorable take-off on Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen. The children enjoyed the show so much that we ever since have had to produce one for them, though we never quite rose to the heights of this first.

Sallie Bird Vandever won a prize for a forceful essay in The Living Church on Race Relations. We had a half holiday in celebration.

On June 4, 1945, both Father Viall S.S.J.E. (now Assistant Bishop of Tokyo) and our Warden were with us for Commencement. The second Super-Chapter of O.S.A. was to meet in Denver early that month, and Sister Ignatia and I had a long talk with the Warden one evening after the Baccalaureate Sermon. We discussed the agenda our House wanted to submit to the Super-Chapter and other matters.

It might seem reasonable at this point to explain the specific circumstances that led to our retirement from the Order of St. Anne. But I think that would be a mistake. We all prefer simply to express our gratitude to the Order of St. Anne for the religious training of our first members and for the

generous love and assistance given us by so many St. Anne's Sisters during the years since the change. We hope that God will bless more and more, as the years go on, the relationship between the two communities.

It is enough to say that we acted in accordance with the formularies of the Order of St. Anne and with the approval of the Visitor and the Warden.

I think, however, that the following record of our transfer to the Order of St. Helena will be interesting.

It was agreed that upon our release we should reorganize as a new community with Father Whittemore as our Superior. He was willing, in accordance with our desire, to impose on us the Rule of O.H.C., but only temporarily. To become permanent and official the arrangement would require sanction from the Chapter of O.H.C.

So we provided for a period of probation during which each of us would be directly under the Father Superior and keeping the Rule at his discretion. This meant that during our probation he could decide how much of the Rule we might keep. In order not to embarrass the Fathers when it came to their decision and to protect the Sisters in case the decision should be adverse, we were to tell no one what Rule we were keeping and we were not to wear the Holy Cross habit. The name of the embryo community would be the Order of St. Helena, for she is a minor patron of O.H.C.

Father Whittemore said that he would need, of course, a local superior to represent him and that he would appoint me as Sister-in-Charge because, said he, "you people have had enough changes." So that was that.

In another conference with the Sisters at this time Father Whittemore brought up the matter of the necessity for a founder's vision in a new community. He said that probably none of us would ever be called a foundress but we could not escape the fact that we were corporately the pioneers and first members of a new Order. Perhaps, he said, God was using all of us small-sized souls added together to do what He usually calls a fair-sized soul to do.

Finally, he gave us a brief instruction in Chapel and urged us as the first members of a new Order to set our standards high. He spoke briefly of the spirit of the Order of the Holy Cross, its comprehensiveness and the primacy of prayer in the mixed life. Before he left us we all knelt down for his blessing.

Our O.S.A. Chapter met for the last time on November 7, when a motion was passed releasing the Sisters, not from their vows but from O.S.A.; to take effect next morning at Mass.

Sister Ignatia and I had designed a habit for our probation time. We dyed some old habits black, cut down the sleeves to O.H.C. width and made square necks on the scapulars. Then we invented a head covering of one piece of unstarched white cloth. We thought it was beautiful and believed we looked like the Little Flower. The scapular went over the white veil and a black veil on top. Father Whittemore had decided against our being novices again.

After Chapter we notified our household of the impending change and invited them to Mass the next day to be present when we took our new habits and made our obedience to Father Whittemore.

Next morning at the offertory we all left choir and went out into "the pit," a basement room where costumes are stored. Here the new habits were laid out and we changed into black tunics, girdle and scapular (we wore no cross) and the new head dress and returned juniores priores, leaving the Superior's stall vacant. Father Cirlot received our obedience as delegate for Father Whittemore.

To be in obedience to the Superior of the Order of The Holy Cross was important, and I believe it was part of the vocation God gave us. It was the only way I can think of whereby we could become a real part of the O.H.C. family and not just an imitation. By the supernatural bond of obedience we could be grafted into that Religious body. The arrangement involved surrendering the normal right of the members of Chapter, of having a vote in the election of the Superior and of a share in making changes in the Rule. This was a real sacrifice, and was intended to be. God did not give to any of us a founder's vision, a call to establish the pattern of a wholly new religious order in the Church. What He did give was much simpler but no less precious, because it was from Him a vocation to live as subjects in the monastic family founded by Father Huntington, under its Rule, and in obedience to its Superior. For us to break this bond of obedience by becoming an independent order would, I believe, be the end of what was begun when our Order was founded.

The school was much excited, naturally, by these strange and unforeseen events and the girls could not restrain their mirth at our appearance. As the Sisters turned up, one by one, at job assembly that first morning a new peal of laughter greeted each one. Finally I announced that I would give a prize on Prize Day to the class which could find the most complimentary things to say about our new habits.

Since our wimples fell almost straight down from the tips of our chins someone suggested that we looked like goats; another said, "Lawrence of Arabia." Nobody thought of the Little Flower, although once on a train someone did ask me if I were a Carmelite. The dyed habits were all slightly off colour, some blue, some purple, some green, some brown. We were bliss-

fully happy and had our picture taken with the novice in her white veil in the middle, looking like the Mother Superior, and Rusty, the dog, at our feet.

That first year under the O.H.C. Rule was a time of deep quiet happiness, at least for me. We were allowed to keep the Rule without dispensation as far as the prayer life was concerned but we were not at first allowed to change our hours of sleep or observe those outward mortifications of the Rule to which we were not accustomed. We said Compline at 8:00 and got through the unfamiliar Benedictine Night Office afterwards: somehow. We kept each detail of the Rule with the greatest exactitude and made many funny mistakes. For instance, we kept all the doors carefully closed, as our copy of the Custumal directed, and did not learn for months that that provision had been changed. We made up every scrap of any missed devotion - visit to the Blessed Sacrament after meals, etc. When it came to Good Friday I was a bit stumped as to how to get everything in. I did not know that the stations of the cross and the penitential psalms were not said on that day nor that the three hours were counted for the required meditation and for spiritual reading. Consequently the time table I evolved was a marvellous sight. Fortunately I had a chance to submit it to the Superior before trying to put the community through it. He explained kindly but with much amusement and cut about half the things off the list.

Before we could be given formally the O.H.C. Rule we had to have a separate house for a convent. Providentially just at the right time a house across the street from the school was offered to us and we bought it. We had to wait for nearly a year to take possession and to make the necessary changes. So our life under the new Rule began in the old quarters in the school building.

The new convent was ready for us in June, all but the beds. Father Whittemore had made a careful sketch for us of every nut and bolt on those "beds without springs" and I took it into Lexington to an ironmonger to have them made. The grimy old bandit who ran the place came out from his forges and stacks of metal and looked at the sketch. "That isn't the right way to make a bed," he said. "I'll make it wider." I insisted that we wanted them just like the sketch. He demurred again, hedged and hemmed and hawed and finally said that was no kind of bed for women to sleep on. "It's what they use in a penitentiary." I persisted, and said it was what our Rule required. Finally in desperation I asked him, "Did you ever hear of reparation?" He shoved his hat back on his head and looked at me wickedly. "Yes," he said, sardonically. "I heard of it."

The beds were late in coming so we put mattresses on the floor for the blessing. Father Whittemore came in June for the ceremony. Everything was ready - the new chapel of the Holy Cross, with its altar stone from St. Helena's altar at the Mother House at West Park, a new blue and white holy water stoup, refectory tables and benches, crucifixes in every room and no

other ornaments. It was all white and clean and quiet - our own holy house - and great was our thankfulness to God when we got it ready for the blessing. Then Father Whittemore came to me looking so sad, with a broken holy water font in his hands. He had smashed it. "It all looked so nice," he said woe-fully. I told him it could easily be fixed and it was a small matter anyway. The crack in it is still visible and always reminds me of him, and of that wonderful day.

It was hot - hot as Kentucky can be in late June. We put the white cope on the already wilted Superior and went through the house in solemn procession. He blessed each place gravely and reverently, each cell by itself, laying down his blessing upon it so lovingly. I know that blessing rests there still.

Father Whittemore gave us our first long retreat in O.S.H. in the summer of 1946. It was another opportunity for us to grow in the spirit of the Order of the Holy Cross and he spent much time instructing us in that spirit. Our convent chapel looks out upon the Southern Railway and the trains have a way of coming through at crucial moments. One morning a particularly noisy one interrupted him. He stopped while it crashed by, and then remarked, "If we didn't have that train we should have had to invent one." He also teased us about our black habits in the heat of the chapel during exposition. "Talk about mortification," he said, "Look at you all sitting there in those black habits with all those candles going."

We felt that we had such a lot to learn and we tried hard to learn it all as well as we could. It was a wonderfully helpful retreat, searching and humbling, uplifting and inspiring, and there were enough jokes. There aren't always, in retreat.

The next big thing I remember was one fall day when a letter came from the Father Superior in the afternoon mail. He was going to Africa for a visitation to the Mission there and it contained his parting instructions. We were to remember that we now owed our obedience to him directly and were keeping the O.H.C. Rule, for the time being, only by his permission; hence could not appeal to it against his directions. He laid upon us these dispensations: from the long Thanksgiving after Mass, from the sung office (we were to recite it instead) and from the second meditation. We were to accept these dispensations without argument. It was a blow, especially the second meditation; and we had practised so long and carefully with Brother Sydney, that summer, to sing the office that it was hard to give it up. But Father Whittemore said all the active houses of O.H.C. had these dispensations and that he was afraid we were getting over-tired, keeping the Rule in full and doing active work at school each day. We were by then allowed to do it all and were on our normal timetable, with Compline at 8:30, etc. (He did permit us to sing Vespers and Compline; and the whole Office on big feast days.)

So I summoned the Community and read them the letter and said that when 5:00 came they might do anything they pleased - except make a second meditation. I still remember sitting grimly in the library from 5:00 - 5:30, working at something.

After two years of probation, during which time we accepted no outside engagements, did not go away from the convent except for business and published nothing about ourselves, a committee was appointed among the Holy Cross Fathers to consider our formal application to O.H.C. Bishop Campbell was chairman. When Father Whittemore came to us in June for our Commencement he brought Bishop Campbell with him. I remember saying to the children in chapel something to this effect: "Far be it from me to suggest that you should give a false impression but I would be grateful if you would all behave at least as well as usual during the visit of the Father Superior and the Bishop." To my horror I saw, on Commencement Day, that an irate parent had Bishop Campbell button-holed and was pouring out his grievance! My heart sank until the Bishop told me about it and added that he understood such things for he had been head of a school. His sympathy with us in the matter was obvious and wholehearted.

At the Prize Day banquet I sat beside the Superior. He said in a low voice to me, "Things are going badly. I'm worried about it. Father Hughson is opposed to it. If we don't give you our Rule we'll have to write a Rule for you - quite a different Rule." I said, "Let's pray - let's make a novena." He replied, "No use going round like windmills. God knows what He is doing."

In the end the Chapter of the O.H.C., meeting in August, 1947, generously and unanimously passed a resolution endorsing our use of the Rule under O.H.C. direction. Though the resolution did not oblige the O.H.C. Superior to act, in person, as our Superior also, it left him free to do so. But the Chapter informally agreed that, while we might wear an adaptation of the O.H.C. habit, we were not for the time being to wear the cross nor were we to take the name. So we continued to be "The Order of St. Helena." She is a good patron for us because she sought and found the Holy Cross.

The next job at hand was to organize the Chapter of the Order and make our formal profession of the Rule in the hands of the Superior. Just before school opened in September he came for the first Chapter; and we were all very busy working out formularies and devising a new headress to go with the white habit and to replace the unpopular goat-like one. We got into a wrangle over the matter, each contending for her own version and despising the others, and it seemed as if we should never come to an agreement. Father Whittemore had had enough of our wrangling (and my railroading) and issued an ultimatum: either we came to an agreement by the next morning at the session of Chapter or he would design the habit! To avert such a fate Sister Ignatia and I got permission to go to school after Matins and continue our

experiments. We worked on the second floor, dressing each other up in various versions and issuing forth to the amusement of the Underwoods who helped the hilarity on with their comments. Meanwhile poor Father Whittemore, on the school-house third floor in the heat, was working until the early morning on our O.S.H. version of the Constitution. We finally finished our job and went to bed. Next morning both the modifications of the Constitution and our habit were approved by Chapter.

On the following day, September 4, 1947, came the most solemn part of the proceeding. At Mass, each of us made her profession of obedience in the new Order of St. Helena, into the hands of Father Whittemore as its Superior. The ceremony was the simplest possible. We went up in order of profession, Sister Jeannette first, and read the vow, which he held for us to see (written on yellow paper) while he took our right hand in his. This was done in the chapel of the new convent.

The first bolt of white mohair for our new habits was a present from O.H.C. Some of our Associates came and helped sew it up into beautiful new shining white habits and we received them from the chaplain at Mass with great joy and pride.

Our first "mission" was to St. Peter's Church, Brenham, Texas. Sisters Josephine and Hannah were sent; and they came back full of tales of their adventures.

The novitiate began to grow and soon the new convent had all twelve of its cells occupied. Father Whittemore decided that we should have a new foundation, a Mother House in a quiet place separate from any active works. We made several expeditions in search of suitable property. Sister Ignatia, Mrs. Hopkins, Betty Gatenbee and I went to look at some land in North Carolina, at Penland; we also looked at some beautiful old Shaker buildings in Kentucky not far from Versailles. But we finally decided to accept the offer of Bishop Gardiner of New Jersey to make use of some property in his diocese at Helmetta. Sister Ignatia was appointed Sister-in-Charge of the new House.

We made many preparations for the foundation, sharing with the Mother House vestments, beds, our refectory table, books from the library and chapel, pots and pans, etc. It was a day of joy and sorrow when the truck and the novices and the Sisters allocated to the new House drove out of the convent driveway.

In 1948 Father Whittemore went out of office as Superior of O.H.C. and consequently, as our formularies provided, of O.S.H. Bishop Campbell, his successor at Holy Cross, consented to serve also as our Superior. So a new chapter in our history began.

The years after the Mother House was founded, when the novitiate moved away from Versailles and we could no longer call upon Father Whitemore for guidance, were years of re-adjustment for all of us; and, as might be expected, years of unusual difficulty. Many problems came to a head and for a time we seemed to do nothing but lose ground. But Bishop Campbell treated us with extraordinary consideration and kindness and God brought us through these years and has preserved us as an Order in spite of all our mistakes and weaknesses. One can begin to see now, looking back, that He has used our very mistakes to teach us where we were ignorant and to strengthen and broaden us where we most needed it. I think we are now more open to His warmth and His simplicity, and I hope we shall more and more reflect these attributes in our community life by our love for Him and each other and by our oneness in that love, sinking our differences and finding the oneness where He gives it. We have perhaps begun to learn that we cannot make the Order one, or even make it be, at all. If it is to live, its life must come from Him.

The school continued its development and the Sisters in Versailles undertook more and more outside work. We had a series of conferences with Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, then editor of the American Journal of Individual Psychology, and with one of his co-workers, Miss Eleanor Redwin. These conferences helped us understand more about the children we were working with and our relationships with each other. They have left a lasting mark upon our school tradition. To them we owe the establishment of such customs as our weekly discussion groups with the children, our report forms, our Big Sister arrangement and many other details and emphases in our school life.

Conference week went on developing, also, chiefly under the inspiration of our Assistant Principal, Emily Hopkins. She was to have been its leader in January, 1953, and was preparing for her part in it when she had a stroke, on the afternoon of January 22. She died early next morning at the Woodford Hospital. With her going the school lost its best teacher, one of its most loyal and helpful staff members and a woman of deep wisdom, true faith, humour and generosity. A statue of Our Lady and the Holy Child was given in her memory, designed for our hoped-for new chapel and so out of scale for our present basement room. The children wrote a fine issue of the Newsletter in her memory.

We developed four new conferences at school: a faculty conference just before school opens in September; a June conference after school has closed, on mission techniques (open to guests); and two new conferences for the children, one on study techniques, in the fall, and a vocational conference a few weeks later. This last is the work of Miss B. E. White, our new Assistant to the Principal.

Conference Week in 1951 was notable for its finale - the first High Mass ever held in term time. We used the gym, which the children, under Sister Jeannette's direction, turned into a beautiful chapel. It was big enough for a

procession and gave us some idea of what an adequate chapel would do for the school.

In 1954 one of our alumnae, Cynthia McEvoy, who had been teaching for two years in Japan, gave us a Conference Week on Japan. We had Alice Sano with us in school that year, also. She was sent us for training by Bishop Yashiro, Presiding Bishop of the Japanese Church. He had visited us the year before; spoke in chapel, sang Vespers with us in the Convent chapel and met the children informally in the tea room. (I remember how charming he was with two of the younger ones who offered to teach him to yo-yo.) Alice is now at work in the Japanese Church.

Another Conference week milestone was our first adventure in co-education. In 1956 we invited St. Andrew's School to send us a delegation for the week. Seven boys came, with the assistant headmaster. The topic was "Patterns of Society," a sociological study of the implications of the Eucharist, led by Father O.D. Reed, Jr. We ended it with High Mass again, served by the boys. The week was a very happy one for both groups.

Here I might pick up some chronology:

In November, 1950, the Father Superior, Bishop Campbell, gave us our crosses. We had not been allowed to wear the cross of the Order when we were given the white habit. Father Packard came for our long retreat the summer of 1950 and I remember his peering at me from under his black cowlick and demanding, "Are you a novice?" (I had taken off scapular and black veil.) "No, Father," I replied. "Are you junior professed?" "No." "Where's your cross then?" I explained that we had not got the cross. We were, however, wholly unprepared for Father Superior's announcement that we might now wear it and that he would bless and give them to us on his next visitation.

The next summer, on July 1, our old school nurse, Maybelle Bowyer, died in her little room in the faculty "reservation." She had begged us not to put her in a hospital and not to let the doctor prolong her life artificially. At the end we spent each night sitting with her, now and then saying a little prayer which she liked to repeat after us. We were all with her when the end came. She had served us lovingly and faithfully for many years and we were glad to be able to take care of her in her last illness.

Father Stevens had our long retreat at Versailles that summer and the Sisters from Helmetta all came for it. They overflowed the convent and some had to be quartered at school. For me it was the beginning of a five months' illness. I was not able to open school and was away in hospitals and with my mother until the end of January. Mrs. Hopkins took my place at school and Sister Jeannette was in charge of the convent. Sister Mary Teresa was sent from Helmetta to help out in my absence. She and Mrs. McDonald began to get the school library into some kind of order. I missed Conference

Week and another Adlerian conference, when Miss Redwin and Father Kroll were at the school simultaneously. Our efforts to combine psychology and religion by means of these conferences came to a stop with this visit because it seemed to have some disturbing results. (It now looks as if the disturbances were symptoms of something deep being wrong rather than indication that our Adlerian experiments were in themselves causes of disturbance.)

In August our secretary, Elaine Edwards, was married at the parish church to our old friend and associate, Father James Purman. The reception was held at school. It was one of the hottest days of the summer but Sister Ignatia put on a real bust for a "breakfast" - beginning with chicken salad and ending with wedding cake.

The class of '56 was especially keen about the Chapel Fund, and in their sophomore year started several student projects for money-making. They made and sold enamel jewelry, under Sister Jeannette's direction, and they undertook a baby-sitting service at the parish church during the late service and in the homes of some of our friends in Versailles. The fund grows each year, through these and various other exertions, although it looks as though we'll make it by the year 1999 at the earliest, at the rate we are going.

In 1954 we began the use of the new liturgy on Easter Even, with the Mass at midnight. We also began that year, as a result of a conference Sister Josephine and I had with some of our Associates, the custom of having a Quiet Day each Lent for Associates and members of the Guild of St. Helena (an association dating back to our first days in Kentucky, and devoted to helping the school) conducted by one of the Sisters.

In that same year also we began to face the implications for our school of the Supreme Court decision on racial integration. The Sisters adopted at Chapter that summer a resolution concerning the matter, setting forth our belief that our school should be open to qualified applicants regardless of race. In Holy Week, 1956, this new policy was announced to our patrons. It was not to begin until 1957 in the day school and 1958 in the boarding school. Being in a border state the change will be difficult, but probably not impossible, to carry out successfully.

For many years I had been interested in building up an association, first of the Church schools for girls and then in a larger "Episcopal School Association." The first meeting of the larger group met at Washington in February, 1955; and I went out of office as head of the girls' school association and was made a member of the continuing committee of the overall organization. It was a satisfaction to feel that that particular job was done, and the new Association in the capable hands of its first president, Mr. Allison Grant of Grace Church School, New York.

This last year saw another co-education Conference Week, on "Africa,"

in preparation for racial integration. Another gift from the Haggin Trust is making possible a number of improvements and repairs at school, including a new art room. We began the school year with a "new wrinkle" - an idea Sister Ignatia got from her visit to Kent - a procession through the school buildings and grounds, stopping at various stations for special blessings upon the chapel, gym, study hall, dormitories, kitchen, gardens, lower school, etc.

Last, (but not least, from my point of view!) is my present visit to England. The Father Superior arranged for me to visit English communities for six weeks, and I have been using some of my time at Fairacres to write the foregoing.

IV

Sister Mary Teresa

Sister Mary Teresa, whose name in the world was Lucile Ferguson, was born in Eagle Mills, Michigan. Her parents were Mark Ferguson and Ida May Wood Ferguson. She has one sister, Hazel Ferguson. Her family was Methodist, but she was confirmed by the Right Reverend G. Mott Williams in St. Paul's Cathedral, Marquette, Michigan.

Her schooling was obtained in the Marquette city schools; the Northern State Normal College; Teachers' College, New York, where she received the B.S. degree in education; and at the University of Chicago, where she did graduate work in literature. She taught in the public schools of Ewen and of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and at the Northern State Normal College at Marquette.

She was received as a Postulant in the Order of Saint Anne, Chicago, on October 28, 1931; clothed as a Novice January 30, 1932; made her Junior Profession on July 26, 1934; and her Life Profession April 14, 1939. She taught in the Convent School for Girls in Chicago and later in that of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

In 1941 she was transferred to the convent in Versailles. She was one of the nine charter members who, in 1945, formed the Order of St. Helena, and was among those sent to the Mother House in Helmetta, New Jersey. She is now a teacher and librarian at Margaret Hall School, Versailles.

Notes on the O.S.H.

The campus:

One of the most charming places in Versailles is the campus of Margaret Hall School. The large old native trees keep it cool all summer; and the flowering

shrubs, evergreens, hedges and the "flower circle" add to its beauty as the seasons change. The main credit for beautifying this campus should be given to Sister Ignatia who planned its landscape and cared for it during many years.

Our campus and school have been chosen as the setting for the story "The First Flower", by Augusta Wallace Lyons, published in the book New Campus Writing, edited by Nolan Miller in 1955.

Margaret Hall School:

One of the most interesting aspects of the school is its collection of pictures, furniture, ornaments, and rare books from Spring Hill, Versailles, the old home of Sister Ignatia's family.

Books:

One of the things that seems to impress new-comers to the Convent and School is the large collection of fine books. Provision is made in our Rule for time for study and reading. The Convent houses about 1000 books, mainly on religious subjects; and the School has over 6,000 volumes, among them many rare books. For an account of these interesting books, see the article, "Our Library" in Pro Eis, February, 1945.

Hospitality:

Many visitors have remarked on the spirit of hospitality shown by the Sisters, faculty, and students of the School. Its atmosphere is truly home-like.

V

Sister Ignatia

(Foundation of a Mother House)

When we began as The Order of St. Helena the novitiate was far more protected and their routine and enclosure more strictly observed than it had been previously. For this reason it was necessary that the novitiate and the convent should be entirely separate from the active, demanding work of the school and that we should have a Mother House away from Versailles altogether, one of the main purposes of which would be to train the novitiate. In response to the mention of our need in the Holy Cross Magazine Bishop Gardner offered us a house belonging to the Diocese of New Jersey, at Helmetta, and Father Whittemore accepted it on our behalf. There never was anything quite like it; but it was well built and comfortable, light and airy. Over the window by the main entrance there was a stained glass panel with pink roses and a blue bow and a motto:

Welcome comes in smiling
Farewell goes out sighing

And we were next door to a big tobacco factory and snuff mill, of which we had the full benefit when the wind was right. The house had belonged to the original owners of the factory. There were a few slight alterations to be made but it was just after the war and supplies and workmen were hard to get. We took possession in April, 1948, and the work dragged on all summer. In order that the regime of the novitiate might not be interrupted the novices remained in Kentucky; and were to go to Helmetta only when the house was ready for occupancy. Still, in spite of our best effort, there were two or three happily confused and disrupted days of settling in after they arrived in September.

Since we were removed from the stimulating life of the school Father Whittemore said we should keep our minds ventilated with some good lectures, balanced by a required minimum of outdoor exercise. We were fortun-

nate in getting a brilliant instructor from the English department at Princeton, who gave us lectures on the humanities. We also had first class Dogmatic Theology lectures by Father Harris Hall, and outlines of study for both. There was a course by the Chaplain on Church History and by the novice mistress on prayer and the religious life. The result was as though a current of mountain air were blowing through the enclosure. I was full of ideas and hopes and plans for the future and I think I never enjoyed anything more than that first autumn.

Sister Josephine had come up with us and was the mainstay in Helmetta that she had been in Kentucky. We knew how she would be missed at both the Convent and school so eventually she was sent back. We were seriously understaffed but we did the best we could. The end of my steeple-chasing came when I was relieved from office at Helmetta and returned to Kentucky in January 1950. Since then I have really been living the life I had tried so long and so hard, and in spite of many sins and mistakes, to establish. It has been the best time of all.

Looking back at our beginning it seems little short of a miracle. We have a sound Rule, a good full school, a good novitiate with happy young Sisters, a united Community, a beautiful Mother House and a growing number of Associates and friends. Inherent in the original idea there was a fine spiritual-intellectual inter-action, a counterpoint, which I have never known before, or anywhere else, but which we seem to have lost as we have taken shape; and for that I am sorry. But it still is as integral a part of the Rule as it ever was; and if in the future the Sisters wish, they can take it up again like a gold thread at the back of a tapestry. I, for one, hope they will and that it will become a permanent part of the pattern.

The important thing, not only to us but to those who follow, is that we are established, as every successive shock proves, on a foundation of bed-rock. We should thank God and the Order of the Holy Cross for that foundation: and on it think and build for the future.

(Note added by Father Whittemore: Sister Ignatia, as provided for in the Rule, the Superior permitting, is now making a trial of the enclosed life. Please help her with your prayers.)

VI

Sister Josephine

My name was Catherine Buchanan Remley and I was born in Hickman, Kentucky, June 23, 1910. (I just discovered last year that Brother Dominic and I are "twins.") My father was Henry Foster Remley, my mother Isabelle Lindsay Remley. My father died when I was about two years old and mother married again three years later; she is Mrs. James Ravenal Cain. Now I have to brag a bit; when General Convention first voted to put women on the National Council she was one of the first to be elected. She and Dad (my stepfather) have always been active and devoted members of the Church; which has, I am sure, had a profound effect on me.

I had one brother who died before I was born; he was a "blue baby" and only lived a few weeks. So, all my life I was an only child, and a pretty spoiled one I am afraid.

I was baptized Syrian Orthodox on July 12, 1911; and, I suppose, confirmed and made my First Communion, too, though there is no record of that. The whole thing was a mistake; there was no Episcopal priest in town so mother was waiting for the Bishop's visitation to have me baptized, but in the meantime a friend of my father's who was Syrian Orthodox was having his child baptized with much to-do; my parents were invited but mother couldn't go because she wasn't well, so my father took me along to keep me from being a nuisance to her, somebody suggested that I be baptized too, and that was it. Mother was quite upset, never felt that it really counted, and wrote in my baby book that I was baptized by a Syrian Rabbi!

After my father died we moved to South Carolina and I became a Baptist. Mother's father had been a Baptist minister and all the family were Baptists, so I just went along with the crowd. At the age of two I didn't have much discrimination, but at the age of about eight I saw an older cousin baptized and since I was terrified of water I was promptly converted to the Episcopal

Church. I had heard enough of the controversy about my Baptism to realize that according to the Episcopal Church that was already taken care of.

I was confirmed I think on Palm Sunday, 1922; I am sure of the day but not of the year. Anyway it was at Trinity Church, Columbia, South Carolina. One of my friends and I solemnly visited churches of various denominations before we would be confirmed, somewhat to Mother's consternation. I think I'd had such a checkered ecclesiastical career she was relieved to have me safely settled in the fold.

I got through high school and college without the usual difficulties about the faith. I remember an argument in college with a Jewish boy who was much cleverer than I was and fancied himself as the campus Atheist. After giving me all the usual arguments he finally said in disgust, "I can strip you of everything but your faith, but you won't give in on that!" None of his arguments seemed to me to prove anything, and if you had to make a bet, why not bet on the side you wanted to win?

Mary Wood McKenzie (now Kroll) had inspired me at the age of about six to be a missionary to Africa, and deep down inside the idea persisted though I got fed up with the "Tell Mrs. So-and-So what you want to be when you grow up" gambit and quit talking about it. Somewhere in high school I decided that it wouldn't be right for me to go off to Africa and leave my parents since I was an only child. I had an idea that missionaries only came home once every seven years; maybe it was true then, I don't know. It was a pretty traumatic experience, though again I never told anybody. I loved God and wanted to do something in the Church, but there didn't seem to be any place for me since I was a woman and couldn't be a priest, and an only child and couldn't be a missionary. So far as I knew, there were no other possibilities.

I never could find anything else that I really did want to do, and spent a good bit of time worrying about it during my last two years of college. That was during the depression - I graduated (B.A.) in 1931 - but I had very little realization of what was going on in the world. Dad and mother both worked on salary for the State Board of Health and it didn't seem to affect us much financially, but I did know that jobs were hard to get. I had thought about trying for one one summer but it didn't seem fair to take them away from people who needed them so I did volunteer work instead, at Trinity Mission.

Just before I finished college Margaret Marston (now Sherman) said something to me about doing parish work in this country and studying at Windham House as a preparation. It seemed like an answer to prayer, so I applied immediately and spent the next two years studying in New York.

There the gravity of the economic situation hit me with far greater impact. You remember what the city was like in the last two years of the Hoover

administration. I'd led a pretty sheltered existence and the sight of the breadlines, the packing box shacks in Central Park and along the Hudson, men picking scraps of food out of garbage cans, was devastating. I was working at a settlement house in the "Hell's Kitchen" district part of the time and studying under people like Niebuhr, Counts, and Adelaide Case. I remember rejoicing when it snowed because people would be given jobs shoveling, becoming an enthusiastic pacifist and Socialist, reading New Russias Primer, joining the F.O.R., etc.

At the time I was discovering Catholicism. I made my first confession at St. Ignatius (Father McCune); and Father John Butler, now of Princeton, who was fresh enough out of seminary to understand my problems, was a real friend and guide.

I earned my Master's in '32 and studied for another year after that; then, since jobs in the Church were scarce, I went to Margaret Hall to teach in the fall of '33. I'd hardly been there a month before I felt that that was where I belonged, but I waited until All Saints' Day to ask Mother Louise, O.S.A., if I might try my vocation. She asked me to wait until July, when school was over, so I was received as a postulant July 2, and clothed as a novice October 2, 1934.

After Mother Louise left, there were only six of us - Sisters Jeannette (life professed), Rachel and Ignatia (junior professed), Blanche, Johanna and I (novices). Sister Blanche left in June, and it seems to me that other postulants came and went but I don't remember too much about them. Jo Person was received as a postulant at St. Anne's House, Boston, for our house; I think in August or September, 1935. I was sent up there in September. Both of us were supposed to be there for a year but her father died so she went home and then back to Versailles; and since one or two teachers left Margaret Hall at Thanksgiving I also was called back to take over a class in the Lower School.

I was Junior Professed December 28, 1936, and Life Professed January 17, 1940. Those were eventful years, but my memories are vague and I think someone else is covering them in detail.

I hope you are going to get our Chaplain, Father Irving Spencer, into this history. You remember the time the Bishop called us up and told us not to lend our black vestments to a priest in the diocese who wanted to say a requiem for his father; and someone said to Father Spencer, "What will you do if the Bishop forbids us to have requiems? After all, it is in the Prayer Book." His reply was, "We will defy the Bishop - charitably, of course." I often think of that last morning, so cold and icy, when he started out to say Mass and never got there. Some boys found him on the corner where he had fallen and he died before they got him to the hospital. Sister Rachel had tried to get him not to come for Mass on bitter cold days like that because she knew he

was not well, but he said, "Reverend Mother, I like to say Mass. Would you deprive me of that privilege?" He was prepared to meet our Lord at the altar, and instead he met him in death.

One other Father Spencer story before I get into O.S.H. You know we always claim to have more ceremonial per square inch in that tiny little basement chapel at Margaret Hall than any other place in the world. Most of it started in Father Spencer's day. I was Sacristan, and what a time I had! He would tell me firmly that something should be done one way and Mother Rachel that it should be done another. They were both very determined people and each would expect me to conciliate the other and bring him (or her) around to his (or her) way of thinking; and meanwhile I had all the girls (whom you named "wacolytes") on my hands to be trained and asking shall we do this or shall we do that. Some fun! But the story I started to tell was of the time Father Spencer decided we should have the Asperges and since we had no money to buy a sprinkler he would make one. He got an aluminum tea ball - large - and a piece of sponge to go inside it, and attached it to the handle of a child's shovel. When he came down the aisle waving that thing it gave off a stream of water like a fire hose. Everybody ducked.

All the business that led up to the founding of O.S.H. I'm vague about, so I'd best leave it to my seniors. I do remember that when Father Powell died Sister Ignatia wanted us to have someone from Holy Cross for our Warden, but the Holy Cross Rule on first reading I found terrifying. I got the impression, for instance, that you could never speak anywhere in the house or grounds except in an office and that you couldn't leave the grounds; which would turn me into a Trappist! And I always used to get Father Hughson and Father Burton mixed up. I remember once they told me to pray that Father Hughson would come for a visit (I think he'd been invited to come en route to St. Andrew's) and before I got to Chapel I'd transposed the name of Burton and wrote it down in my intercession book. I prayed for months that Father Burton would come, and finally asked if I should keep on. They were amazed and then amused when they realized what I had done, but I had the last laugh: the next day Father Burton DID COME, out of the blue! Mrs. Hopkins always loved that story, and every once in a while I'd get a request from one of her friends, "Please ask Sister Josephine to pray for"

To get back to the Warden election - Sisters Rachel and Jeannette wanted Father Gavin and he was elected, but we never knew whether he got the letter asking him to be warden or not; he died very shortly after. Then you were elected, and O.H.C. really began to mean something to me!

With regard to the early days of O.S.H. I'm sure that Sister Rachel put in her account all about those horrible black dyed habits. Cora who did the dyeing thought we wanted them for a Hallowe'en masquerade. Sister Rachel said she expected to look like the Little Flower in hers and instead she looked like Lawrence of Arabia. I hope she will say how curious people were to

know what Rule we were keeping. The kids got out the Poor Clare's book on religious communities and compared our new time table to that of each order in it. Some of them came up with pretty shrewd guesses.

The next year we moved over to the Convent; and we got our white habits. The year after that, the Helmetta House was opened. I remember waiting for weeks for a telegram from Sister Ignatia saying she was ready for me to come to Helmetta; and then the weeks she and I stayed with the McCoys while the work on the house went on. How she ever did it all I don't know. Helmetta was such a funny little one-horse town that you couldn't buy anything but stamps and a few groceries.

Father McCoy hadn't been there long enough to know the ropes and, though he was a dear, and helpful as a priest, he just wasn't the type of person who would have been much help about things like that. Sister had no car and transportation was very difficult. I'll never forget the filing system she had when I got there - invoices, etc., in piles all around her room. And I'll never forget the not unpleasing smell that floated about from the snuff factory.

Eventually, though, everything was done; we moved in, and the novices came up from Kentucky. I remember the day we moved in (Sister Mary Teresa had come to join us by that time) and when we left the McCoys and brought our stuff over Sister Ignatia said, "Now let's begin!" We felt we were starting on a real adventure.

Those first few months in Helmetta were among the happiest in my life as a Religious. Up until then, the School had been so absorbing; now we had no active work to amount to anything, not many guests, nor even contacts with people in town. We just settled down to be a Convent, and it was very peaceful.

I went back to Helmetta for about an hour's visit a couple of years after we'd moved to Newburgh and was shocked to see what a really ugly little town it is. All that time I'd been looking at it through rose-colored glasses, I guess - seeing only the beautiful things, like the view of the little church on the bluff across the highway (and the Pennsylvania railroad tracks!) from the Convent, the lovely birch trees and one enormous copper beech, the water-lilies which covered the pond in summer, the coloring of the trees in the swamps in autumn, and snow - the most I'd ever seen, at that time. Even to think of it makes me homesick for the smell of snuff!

That summer I was transferred to Versailles, where I stayed until I was sent back to Helmetta as Novice Mistress and Sister-in-Charge in December of 1950. When I got there I found that Sister Ignatia had arranged everything so that the change could be made as smoothly as possible. I was installed by the Father Superior (Bishop Campbell) on December 29th and Sister Ignatia left for Kentucky on the 30th. There were then eight members of the

household. Sister Mary Teresa, Sister Hannah and I were life professed; Sister Virginia junior professed; Sisters Jean and Helen novices; Helen Hopkins a postulant; and Sister Margaret a companion. In 1951 Helen Hopkins was clothed as a novice and Helen Abbot received as a postulant.

By August, 1952, we had received two new postulants, Marian Ayres and Mintie Simpson, and a new companion, Mrs. Katharine McKee. Marian was clothed as Sister Mary Joseph on March 11. Helen Abbot was clothed as Sister Louise on October 12. Sister Jean made her Junior Profession on November 7 and Sister Virginia her life profession on January 9. Sister Mary Teresa had been transferred to Kentucky.

It was a rugged year in many ways. I don't think I could have gotten through those first few years as prioress without the understanding and support of Father Kroll, who was assistant superior and our spiritual director. Bishop Campbell was so busy he did not come very often, and entrusted our direction largely to Father Kroll.

The tension in the international situation didn't help any and, since the New Jersey Civil Defense units were very active, we were constantly reminded of it. Sister Virginia and I took a course with some 80 other Helmetta-ites, in First Aid, from a man from South River with a very Brooklynesque accent. He taught us among other things "how to tell if da victim was moidered or drowned" by whether or not there was water in his "bronical tooobs." Everybody passed the course, but I was glad none of them had to first-aid me.

Next thing we knew, we were house-hunting, because we had outgrown the Helmetta Convent. All the available space was occupied by Sisters and there was no room at all for guests. Having apparently exhausted the possibilities for a permanent mother house in and around Poughkeepsie, as well as looking at several others on that side of the river, in West Park, at Saugerties and even in Philadelphia, I got out a road map shortly after the 1952 Chapter and selected Newburgh as the next most likely spot to try. Bishop Campbell suggested that I get in touch with Father Frank Carruthers, rector of St. George's Parish and get his ideas on the subject. So I wrote Father Carruthers; and promptly discovered that he is a man of action. He was at Camp St. George fishing when my letter arrived; but his secretary read it to him over the telephone and he had her call me immediately. Newburgh was an ideal spot for our mother house, St. George's Parish would welcome us, I was to arrange to come up immediately, and I think he expected to have the ideal mother house all picked out for us by the time I got there. The funny part is, he did!

I delayed matters somewhat by getting a cracked skull in an automobile accident on October 2, and having to send Sisters Jeannette and Mary Florence to do the investigating. The Father had picked out several places after seeing real estate dealers and apparently looking at dozens of houses, but

the one he was most enthusiastic about was the John Wilkie house on Route 94 in New Windsor, "Forge Hill," Sister Mary Florence liked it too and thought it would be all right for us; Father Carruthers said she was carried away by the flowers Alex had planted in the garden, of which she brought home samples. Sister Jeannette was more doubtful but thought it had possibilities. They had drawn diagrams and brought back pictures; and a message from Father urging me to come, cracked skull or no cracked skull. (He claimed later he didn't know I'd really been hurt!) It wasn't much of a crack, so on October 30th Sister Katharine drove me up there and I was impressed. We looked at several places but Forge Hill seemed definitely the best to me. Father Carruthers said that he and his assistant would serve as our chaplains without charge, which would help with the financial end of things, so when I got home I began figuring on how we could make ends meet. I reported to the Father Superior and he agreed to meet me there on November 12th. Several others from Holy Cross came with him - I think Fr. Knoll and maybe Br. George but I am not sure. He was dubious at first, but after he had seen the two first floors and was following me up the attic stairs he said firmly, this is the place for us, and I was pretty sure I agreed with him. Different groups of Sisters stopped by to see it en route to West Park on December 1 for Fr. Gill's profession and December 10 for Fr. Bicknell's ordination.

We became more and more convinced that we had found the right place at last, so I went in to New York to talk it over with Mr. Haupt from a business point of view. There was land along the highway which could if necessary be sold for residence lots; and, while we would have hated to do that, it seemed to me it was safe to take a mortgage on it, since if we couldn't make good it would mean losing just the lots, not the whole place. Mr. Haupt agreed that my reasoning was sound. However this was one of the many cases where Mr. Haupt's guidance and co-operation stood us in good stead. Due to his efforts, a few large gifts and hundreds of smaller ones, a mortgage became unnecessary. It was wonderful to feel that so many of our friends had a share in our new home and we scarcely know to which group, under God, we should be more grateful - the small one which was able to give so much or the large one whose members, with equal generosity, gave all that they could.

The Board of Directors approved the purchase on December 18, and after much legal procedure we took title on March 24, 1953. On April 8 Sister Katharine and I went to Newburgh to see about the renovations and spent the night in our new home for the first time. Sisters Mary Florence, Mary Michael and Helen, and Sister M.F.'s Aunt Augusta and I had eaten the first meal there on January 19, picnic style, before the house was really ours.

From this time on we were really trying to keep two establishments going. Someone had to be at Newburgh most of the time; and I, because I was responsible, and Sister Katharine, because she had the most practical experience, bore the brunt of it. Others took turns coming with us to help, or came for a while when we went back to Helmetta to spell us off. Exhausting

as it was, we loved every minute of it. They teased me because every time we came back from a shopping trip or anything I'd be surprized all over again and say, "My, this is such a pretty place." I still feel that way about it!

Alex Barrowman was invaluable. He spread gallons of Super Kem-Tone on the walls and oil paint on the woodwork; and kept an eye on things when none of us was around. Father Carruthers put on his jeans and came out and painted and hammered. He and John McGinnis did most of the work in the Chapel. He made choir stalls out of some benches someone had given him from an ice cream parlor. Father Carruthers also brought the vestry of St. George's out to paint the novitiate common rooms.

All the workmen were very friendly and pleasant to deal with. On my birthday we invited them in for some cake at tea time - a lovely cake with white icing decorated with pink roses which the Sisters had somehow concocted in spite of the mess - and Vincent Rooney, the carpenter, dashed down to the corner to get some pink and white ice cream to add to the festivities. It was one of the nicest birthday parties I ever had.

We were staying back in the old servants' wing of the house, with a screen in the hall to separate us from the workmen. How often in the early afternoon I'd go back hoping for a little rest, and just when I got settled some man's voice would call out from the edge of our "enclosure", "Sister Josephine," and I'd have to drag myself up to see about something. Then at night we'd be so tired we would get to bed early, and then Mr. Sinnamon, the electrician, who always seemed to do his work between 9 P.M. and midnight, would start drilling and hammering in the basement beneath us.

Finding a clean spot to eat was always a problem; we usually ended up carrying our food out to the patio. One Saturday we were expecting Father Superior and several others for tea; so, thinking we would be free from workmen that day, we gave the kitchen - our usual place for receiving guests - a good cleaning. Just as we finished the plasterer arrived and began knocking down the wall back of the stove! The only other place we could find which could be made presentable was the professed common room, so we took our tea up there. Mrs. Rooney had brought us an angel food cake, so nobody minded the dirt.

It was fun as spring came on to watch what would come up in the garden; there were some lovely surprises, like the yellow tulips behind the pool - hundreds of them.

Finally the work got far enough along for us to clear some of the rooms; so we began bringing books and furniture up from Helmetta on each trip. First the upstairs was finished, then the library, chapel, refectory; and we gradually moved all the tools and junk towards the back part of the house. Eventually everything was straight but the room which is now the guest common

room was piled high even after we moved.

The moving was quite something. I hope Sister Mary Florence will tell it from the Helmetta end; how they would need this, that or the other and find it had departed in the last carload for Newburgh. By that time we had bought a station wagon in addition to our companion, Sister Katharine's car; so we were able to carry quite a lot.

The moving itself required some complicated planning but it went amazingly smoothly. Sisters Louise, Mary Joseph, Mary Michael, Katharine and I had been in Newburgh cleaning up and doing the last minute jobs; Sisters Jeannette, Mary Florence, Helen and our postulant, Betty Zinnsmeister, in Helmetta. Betty got sick and had to be "ambulanced" up in the station wagon. So Sister Louise took the wagon back to Helmetta on Saturday, June 27. Sister Katharine and I took the car down early Sunday morning before Mass; we went to Mass that day in South River. The station wagon meanwhile had been loaded and Betty put into it on a mattress, so as soon as we got to Helmetta Sister Louise started for Newburgh with Sister Jeannette and Betty in the station wagon. She brought the station wagon back to Helmetta either that afternoon or early the next morning. About 9 o'clock on Monday, June 29th, the movers arrived. We helped where we could, and cleaned up behind them; then when they were about ready to leave Sisters Louise, Helen and Katharine started for Newburgh in the car, leaving Sister Mary Florence and me to pick up the pieces and give the house a last dusting. We had the station wagon almost full of oddments before we got through. The movers left about 1; and we shortly after. It almost tore my heart out to leave Helmetta with all its treasured memories - not the right attitude for a Sister, I guess, but that's the way I felt. We passed the movers going into New Brunswick and reached Newburgh a few hours later; it was about a three hour drive. From then on we expected the movers any minute, but they didn't show up until 8 P.M. They did a fast job when they did come, though, and by nine everything was in place - nothing lost, broken or damaged - and our new Mother House was established.

The first Mass was said on July 3 by the Father Superior, served by Holy Cross novices; until then we had been going into St. George's. It wasn't until July 27, though, that we really settled down on schedule. Up until then various things such as study and spiritual reading had to be dispensed to get on with the work.

Our long retreat was in Kentucky that year.

We were scarcely settled before guests began arriving and requests for work came in; very different from Helmetta where we had so little room for guests and were so isolated. The work we do now, which began almost immediately and has increased until we have about all we can carry, is as follows: guests at the house for rest, retreat and spiritual refreshment (the

Sisters often conduct quiet days or short retreats for them); Sunday school and parish visiting at St. George's, Newburgh, ditto at St. Thomas, New Windsor; Sunday School at St. Agnes, Balmville; one afternoon a week at St. Andrew's, Beacon (the work we do there varies from year to year); talks, quiet days, summer conferences, children's missions and vacation Bible schools away from home; requests for these constantly increase. It is wonderful to be so near Holy Cross, where the Superior can visit us often and also other members of the Order and we can visit the Monastery occasionally.

So having got us up to the present, I'll quit for now, and if I think of anything else I'll send it along later.

Post Script.

I've already thought of several things I forgot!

1. The blessing of the house at Helmetta. Sister Ignatia will doubtless have included the important things about that - how Bishop Gardner, Bishop Campbell and Father McCoy officiated; but did she tell you that they were all apparently in seminary together, and how it amused us to hear such dignitaries calling each other by their first names in stage whispers all through the service? And how, after the guests had left, we went to the basement for something and found it four inches deep in water? The drains were stopped up - it took us several days to get them cleared - the water from all the dozens of dishes we'd washed, etc., was piled up in the basement.

2. The blessing of the house here at Newburgh - no casualties this time. Bishop Donnegan officiated, with a large delegation from the Order of the Holy Cross and Father Carruthers, our Chaplain, assisting. Lots of guests, including four Sisters of St. Margaret. We have a tape recording and some very good pictures. Father Kroll was celebrant at a High Mass in the presence of the Bishop of the Diocese, in the patio. When Father Kroll heard the recording his comment was, "And I thought I was going so slowly!"

3. Three aspirants have come and gone since we have been in Newburgh; but Marilyn Snedicker came back after a year.

4. Sisters Mary Joseph and Mary Michael were life-professed; at St. George's Church because our chapel is so small.

VII

Sister Marianne

I was born in Manila, Philippine Islands, June 11, 1905, three hours before my twin brother. My father was Rufus Herman Lane of the Marine Corps and my mother was Gertrude Mills, daughter of a Methodist minister and niece of the Thoburns of India. Both of them came from the Cleveland-Pittsburgh-Wheeling part of Ohio. My parents were confirmed in 1907 and the six children, three boys and three girls, all grew up in the Episcopal Church, actively engaged in Sunday School, choir, Junior Auxiliary, etc. We lived six years in California and two in Santo Domingo; and settled in Fairfax County, Virginia, as Washington suburbanites, when I was 15. Schooling before that was in bits, in Washington and the West Indies, but I did five consecutive semesters of public high school in Washington and four straight years for my A.B. from Smith College in 1926. I worked for two years as secretary at St. Paul's Church, Washington, then spent a year abroad. I did some study, some travelling, some visiting, and had a secretarial job in Paris for three months. I came back to start teaching French, which I've done off and on ever since. I taught two years at Miss Madeira's School in Washington. Then I made a week's trial of my vocation to the religious life as a postulant at St. Anne's Convent, Kingston, followed by a year's graduate work at George Washington University, finishing my M.A. and battling devils. I spent seven months in Greece in 1933, keeping house for my consular brother, and came back to do a year of graduate work at Johns Hopkins. After that I taught French at St. Anne's School in Charlottesville for five years. In the summers I did various kinds of study and travel - three language school sessions, three summers abroad and one in Mexico.

In June, 1939, I was received as a postulant in the Versailles Convent. Clothing, in October; Junior Profession, October, 1941; life Profession, October 7, 1944. It was a great blessing to me to find the Versailles Convent and to be permitted to become a part of it. I had been trying for twelve years to get myself headed in one direction instead of two or three. Part of the reason

for my being able to settle down was my knowledge of other unsuccessful experiments, but much of it was the steadiness and courage and wide perspective of the guidance and direction given me first by Sister Rachel and then by Sister Ignatia, as novice mistress. The life of the convent and of the school seemed to me to be of a piece. My earliest letters from Sister Rachel were about Louise Geng and the steps being taken to get her out of Germany. The Underwoods came that fall, about the time that war was declared in Europe. There was a strong fresh wind of hope and compassion and concern with human freedom and happiness everywhere that helped to give the right proportions to our own seeking for individual and corporate wholeness and holiness. It was easy for me to tell casual inquirers that I came to Versailles because there was a swimming pool and tea every afternoon, but there was no need to stop there if they wanted to know more.

One of the high points in our chapel history was the visit of two Roman Benedictine nuns to the Versailles convent in January, 1951. A Benedictine Priory in Fort Smith, Arkansas wrote that they were beginning to sing their office in English and, having heard that we were using an English translation of the Benedictine office, asked if two of their Sisters might come to confer with us and to hear us sing. We answered that we were few, ungifted and inexperienced, but that we would be glad to have them come. They did come, early one afternoon, and conferred for about two hours with Sister Jeannette. They reported in at the Divine Providence house on the corner where they were to spend the night, and then came back for Vespers and Benediction and again for Compline. They had intended to come to Mass the next morning but apparently were dissuaded by their hostesses. They came for breakfast with us the next morning early enough to hear the end of Mass, standing in the hall outside the chapel.

After breakfast we all gathered in the Common Room to get acquainted. They had little conception of the fact that we practise the Catholic religion and we were delighted to enlighten them. They were touchingly courteous and apologetic about the restrictions on their participation in our ceremonial, such as kneeling and genuflecting. And we were all interested in each other's millinery. They left us happy in the knowledge that Rome and Canterbury had been sisters together in our convent, and deepened in the fervor of our prayers for the unity of Christ's Church.

VIII

Sister Frances

To begin with, these are the vital statistics on Sister Frances:

Born in Chester, Pennsylvania, on May 12, 1910 (Anne Morris Cole)

Parents: Thomas Sessions Cole and Sue Morris Cole

Brothers: three; sisters; four

Unbaptized and unconfirmed until late in 1931, attended Sunday School at St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church in South Philadelphia from 1916 until 1930

Graduated from Girls' High School, Philadelphia, 1927; A.B. Bryn Mawr College, 1931; M.A. Bryn Mawr College, 1934

Taught Latin, Margaret Hall School, 1931-1933

Taught Latin and English, Chester High School, Chester, Pa., 1934-1939

Received as postulant, September 3, 1939

Clothed as novice, December 4, 1939

Junior professed, January 6, 1942

Life professed, July 14, 1946 (O.S.H.)

During the first years that the Order of St. Helena was in its new home, Sister Ignatia and I were completely detached from the work at the School and

kept house at the Convent; doing the cooking, and incidentally teaching the Novices to cook without breaking the lesser silence. Sister Ignatia is an excellent cook and had much to teach us. The students from school used to come to help with the dishes, and arriving early and finding the delicious bits unguarded in the kitchen, could not resist "licking the platter clean." Once, the reader, having been interrupted while eating her dinner, returned to find it gone and one horrified girl in the kitchen.

The various modifications of the Rule which we have been asked to make were not proposed for quite a while. For instance, we said our regular intercessions and the Litany, and when guests came to the kitchen to work, only the sister-in-charge and the guest mistress had permission to talk with them. On one occasion, Miss Freeland was alone at the sink washing Sunday dinner dishes, while I emptied one serving dish after the other and took them over to the table behind her. Finally, after this had been going on for some minutes, she looked up at the wall above the sink, and addressed it, "The Ford assembly line has nothing on us!" Another time, a student, an avid baseball fan, tried to combine making her special brand of chocolate cake for Sister Mary Teresa's birthday with following the World Series on the radio. It was a very well-beaten cake!

The high moments in our life as Sisters in the Order of St. Helena and of mine as a member of the Order are the solemn procession to bless the Convent before it was shut off for use, my life profession shortly after in the school chapel with Father Whittemore receiving my vows and preaching a grand little sermon on the significance of them, the time Father Whittemore saw us for the first time in our beautiful white habits and said we looked "like Easter all the time," and finally the presentation of our black crosses by Bishop Campbell on the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, in 1950.

IX

Sister Mary Florence

I was born on January 15, 1914, in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, and baptized Florence Evelyn in the Evangelical Lutheran Church there. My parents were Louis D. Thomas and Fredericka Schoening Thomas. When I was two and a half years old my mother died of tuberculosis and I was adopted by my maternal grandparents with my father's approval. Three years later, my grandparents adopted my double cousin, Irvin (our mothers were sisters and our fathers were brothers), whose parents died in the 1919 flu epidemic. "Bud" and I grew up as brother and sister.

In our home, also, was Aunt Augusta, younger sister to my mother, who did not marry, and who has been "mother" to us, and close by were Aunt Helen, the youngest of the Schoening daughters, and her husband, Fred Boss. The Bosses had a son, Edward, who was also more like a brother than a cousin. So I was blessed with many loving relatives who more than made up for my father's lack of interest in me, subsequent to his second marriage.

When I was about three, we moved to the small town of Lyndon, a suburb of Louisville, and soon after I was enrolled in the Episcopal Sunday School, there being no Lutheran Church there. My brother and I were confirmed at the usual age and the rest of the family, with the exception of the grandparents, finally came into the Church, too.

My first school was a typical Kentucky country school—two rooms with four grades in each room. I finished my last three elementary grades in a more progressive school and then attended the co-educational county high school at Anchorage. I went from there to the University of Louisville for two years, took one year at Louisville Normal School where I got my Teacher's Certificate and began to teach in a public elementary school in Louisville in the fall of 1934. In June of 1942, I got my Bachelor of Arts Degree after attending D.A.E. classes in the late afternoons, evenings and during

the summers at the University.

The third great sorrow in my family came when I was a Junior in high school. My grandmother died of cerebral hemorrhage, in her early sixties, and my grandfather and aunts were devastated with grief. They seemed to have nothing to sustain them, spiritually, and I remember trying, desperately, to comfort them. From then on, I began to think more deeply about the Faith but I had no one to give me guidance. It was not until the summer after my first year in college that I began to learn something of what the true Catholic Faith is. A Deacon, fresh out of General Seminary, came to take charge of our mission and the one at Pewee Valley and he immediately began to teach.

Two years later, June 1934, I saw Episcopal nuns for the first time when I went to attend the Bluegrass Conference at Margaret Hall School. I became an Associate and, from then on, made frequent visits and annual retreats. No thought of vocation for me ever crossed my mind, however.

In December of 1941 my grandfather died and, since my brother had married several years before, my aunt and I were left alone. I had never really had the desire to teach school; and now the thought of doing it for the rest of my life was becoming very distasteful. Then, I made a retreat and felt that God was asking something special of me, But what? I talked with Sister Rachel and Father Adams, who had conducted the retreat, and, to my surprise, they told me that perhaps I had a vocation to the Religious Life. Though I was stunned, the thought rang true in my mind and heart and we set the date for one year hence. The Sisters of St. Anne in Versailles were the only Sisters I knew and I had no desire to shop around.

On St. Anne's Day, 1943, I went to become a postulant. To my surprise, I was given a large box of dresses and veils, told to select the best fit, press it and appear at a certain time at the Chapel door. I did, looking very odd as all the dresses were too long for me. On November 1, I was clothed as a novice and was the only person in the novitiate until the following September.

During that first winter, many things happened to make life in the Convent very exciting. Since we were living right over the gym, I went to sleep at least three nights a year to the tune of dance music and worked, read and prayed every day accompanied by Bach, Beethoven, etc., as the girls practised their piano lessons and prepared for the operas. In between the music periods, the shouts from the games played in the gym and the delightful squeals from the swimming pool helped us keep the silence. Then there were the escapades; on several nights in a row fires were set in a closet in study hall and, for a week of nights following, the faculty detectives met in the library, within hearing distance of "our" cell, and worked in whispered tones to solve the mystery. Since I did not go to faculty meetings, I never did hear the answer even after the county police came to fingerprint everybody in the school.

One night in the spring, a lower school girl jumped from her window to a coal pile below and ran away. The search went on the rest of the night but, of course, a novice could not take part.

Then, on February 12, 1944, our Chaplain, Father Spencer, died in the snow on the sidewalk as he was on his way to Mass. We had the Solemn Requiem and the Burial Office in the school Chapel. For months afterward, we had no permanent Chaplain.

I was not surprised at Sister Rachel's goings and comings "on business" and the other preliminary moves made toward the decision to change Rules: such as our Warden's visit and that of our Bishop Visitor. But how we ever taught school in the midst of all this secret excitement remains a mystery! I suppose the dyeing of our habits caused the greatest outward concern as we could not find anyone, locally, who would do it. We had to resort to taking half of them to a dyer's in Louisville and old colored Fanny consented to do the rest. Her batch came out green, blue and even polka dot, but not black as we wanted them. She questioned the Sister who went for them, "Is you all going to have a Halloween party?"

It was the Octave Day of All Saints when we became the first nine members of the Order of St. Helena; and we moved to the Convent in early June. June 30 was set for the blessing. There has not been a hotter day in all the summers in Kentucky! Father Superior valiantly donned the cope and, followed by the Sisters and many guests, blessed every nook and cranny in the house. Sallie Bird Vandever carried the crucifix at the head of the procession and literally mopped the perspiration from her brow at each stop.

The next big events followed quickly. With the coming of the two postulants on July 8, 1947, Father Superior began to discuss the need for a Mother House apart from the school. During the late summer some of the Sisters made trips through Kentucky and North Carolina in search of property with suitable buildings. Since none was found, notices were put in Church periodicals and soon an offer was made by the Bishop of New Jersey of a house in Helmetta. Father Superior went to investigate and subsequently came to visit us bubbling over with the wonders of "Helmetter."

In the meantime, Holy Cross Chapter had given the first official stamp of approval to O.S.H. We could share the Rule and the Superior with their blessing and were no longer on probation. In addition, we could devise a nun's counterpart of the white habit and corresponding wimple and veils. Some of the Associates set to work sewing the habits and Sister Ignatia began designing wimples. Father Superior submitted his design of a lovely and elaborate headdress that far exceeded St. Mary's wings in style! Finally Sister Rachel sat up with Sister Ignatia until the wee hours one night, and they came forth with the present pattern. On November 8, 1947, we ceremoniously donned the official O.S.H. habit while the entire school and many friends

outside waited suspense for the first glimpse.

On December 6, I was told that I had been elected to Life Profession and could make my vows early in January, combining my day with the clothing day of the two novices-to-be. I had made my Junior Vows on December 27, 1946, so I had to take temporary vows for a few days. Father Superior wrote his regrets that he could not come and that he was delegating Father Parker to act for him. Thus we had the famous "Striped Pajama" Sermon which Sister M.F., at least, will never forget. One cloud hung over the day, January 8th. The novices got colds and their clothing was postponed until the 9th.

In early spring Sister Ignatia made her first trip to Helmetta to start the work of converting the rather ornate Victorian house into a Convent. The novices, postulant and two professed Sisters were expecting to join her in the summer. Much furniture and other equipment had been gathered together to send to the new house but the slow workmen at the Helmetta end prevented the move until the end of September. It was a sad day in Versailles and yet a day of rejoicing when the group of Sisters finally set out for their new home. After a week of real manual labor, they were able to have the house ready for the blessing on October 3rd, 1948. The first Sisters resident there were: Sister Ignatia, Sister-in-Charge and Novice Mistress, Sister Mary Teresa, Sister Josephine, Sister Virginia, nov., Sister Carolyn, nov., and Irene Sohren, postulant. In January Sister Josephine and Sister Hannah were swapped. The postulant had left before Christmas and in January, also, Sister Carolyn left.

The first visit of all the Sisters to the Mother House was in July, 1949, when we made our long retreat there, conducted by Father Kroll, our Assistant Superior. I didn't visit there again until the Christmas vacation of 1951-52 when I was sent to Helmetta in order to be precentrix at the service of the Life Profession of Sister Virginia, January 9, 1952. Sister Josephine was now Sister-in-Charge and Sister Ignatia was back in Versailles. The Superior decided that I should be permanently resident at the Mother House so I moved there after our long retreat held in Versailles in August, 1952. Sister Virginia was transferred to Kentucky in my place.

A few days after my arrival in Helmetta, Sister Josephine and I drove to Boston to attend the meeting of the Conference on the Religious Life that was being held at the same time as General Convention. When the time came for the election of officers for the next triennial, our Superior, Bishop Campbell, stood up on his two feet and nominated me for secretary, to my great dismay. Before I could think, the nominations were closed, a single ballot was cast and I was it. I shook for hours afterward and was utterly unhappy at the thought of the responsibility. But I was soon able to park this in the back of my mind because of a new interest that occupied our attention. In response to Sister Josephine's inquiry about vacant houses around Newburgh, Father Carruthers insisted that we come to look at what he had found. Sister Josephine was recovering from an automobile accident so she sent Sister Jean-

nette and me. On October 15, 1952, we first set eyes on this lovely spot. I was sure from the first minute that it would be what we wanted, though I had a time getting the others interested enough to go see it. In December the Corporation decided to buy the property and in March, 1953, we took title. Then began some hectic months when our numbers were divided between Helmetta and Newburgh and the breaking up of one house to establish another demanded much, physically and spiritually, of us. Since my job was chiefly at the Helmetta house, my remembrance is primarily of the real effort we made to go right on living the Religious Life though our numbers were depleted, the house was being shorn, the manual labor was great and we had a sick postulant. Finally, on June 29, 1953, the movers came and loaded their trucks with the furniture that we weren't able to get into our station wagon. We dusted the floors once more, tried to clean the old, black stove, shed a few tears when we looked at the empty Chapel and left Helmetta.

The next few days and weeks at Newburgh were as hectic as the last ones at Helmetta. We were able to have our first Mass on July 3rd and, to our great joy, Father Whittemore was allowed to come. We went to Versailles for our long retreat as it would have been very difficult to make all the arrangements here. On October 2, Bishop Donegan, the Order of the Holy Cross and many other friends came for the Dedication of the Houses. On October 12, Father Superior conducted the very elaborate blessing of the Altar.

I will leave the details of Life Professions, etc., to the other accounts you have received. During the four years that we have been here, I seem to see constant indications of God's blessing upon our life and work. I am so thankful that I am a member of the O.S.H. and that the Sisters have been so generous and loving to me.

The wonderful relationship with St. George's Parish as well as the generosity of the Clergy and people must be mentioned. Father Carruthers' name will loom large in any history of O.S.H.

Last, but most important of all, is the part played by O.H.C. from the start. Your trust in us, your love and patience and that of subsequent Superiors and other members of the Order who have had direct contact with us, has been absolutely invaluable. If we are of any service to God and his Church, it will be because of the O.H.C. Rule and direction.

X

Sister Mary Joseph

Here goes! I was born on June 6, 1928, in Evanston, Illinois. All the "seniores" rib me about my tender age but, really, I have nothing to do with it. Those responsible are Harold Roy and Helena Bird Ayres, who are again living in Evanston after a 1937-51 business (DuPont) transferral to the Philadelphia suburbs. My sister, almost eight years my senior, is married and living in Moorestown, New Jersey.

After attending public grade and high schools, I majored in science in the School of Education of the University of Pennsylvania and graduated in June of 1950. That summer I did graduate work at the University of Virginia, practice-taught at Upper Darby Jr. High (near Philadelphia) in the fall, and in the spring had a regular teaching job at Springfield High in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. Before teaching, I did part-time and summer work as a nurse's aide, sales-clerk and camp waitress.

My family is Methodist and I was brought up as such; but toward the end of my high school career I knew something was missing and searched until I was introduced to the Episcopal Church. I was indoctrinated and confirmed (1949) at St. Mark's, Philadelphia, where I remained until my entrance into the Order. A priest there helped me to recognize my vocation. I was set on another Community but he urged me to visit others, O.S.H. among them. Shortly after a June, 1951, weekend visit to Helmetta, during which I was allowed to read the Rule, The Holy Ghost let me know that was IT. Beside the Rule, I think the family spirit struck me most forcefully. I applied for admission and corresponded with Sister Josephine, who recommended a visit to Versailles, if possible. So I attended the Associates' short retreat there in August, was admitted as a Postulant in Helmetta in September, 1951, and clothed the following March. I'm grateful for the quiet, uninterrupted, relatively guestless part of my novitiate spent in Helmetta and believe that atmosphere had a lot to do with laying a "firm foundation." (One of Sister Alice's

gems is her statement that she had expected the Newburgh convent to be peaceful but that it turned out to be such an active peace!) The only events that disturbed the peace for me were the departures of several members of our family, but God has since made it much easier for me to accept these as His will. Helmetta had a great deal of local color but not enough space in the convent, so the spring of 1953 found us prospecting for a new place. When the house at Newburgh was decided upon, work-crews of us drove up from time to time with station wagon loads of worldly goods to help with the renovation operations. One incident I recall in this connection was the time a few of us were sanding the common room floor and Sister Mary Michael rushed in with a frantic, "What do you do when you gargle with Clorox?" She had mistaken some in a glass for mouthwash. We looked on the Clorox bottle for an antidote and found that it read: "Good for drainpipes!"

The Grand Move took place on June 29 and the Altar was consecrated and the first Mass celebrated on July 3. October 2 was Dedication Day, a very joyous occasion. (To "have done" with dates and personal history, I made my Junior Profession the following Lady Day and was Life Professed on May 1, 1956.) During the first days at Newburgh I remember our wondering what special works God would send us to do; it has been fascinating (and rather breath-taking) to watch them take shape and increase, so that there are now many more requests than we can fill: parish teaching and visiting; daily vacation schools, children's missions and conferences; guests, retreats and quiet days; etc. The growth of our band of Associates and St. Helena's Guild members has been wonderful, too. Some of us once said how nice it would be to bake our own Altar Breads, and even that has come to pass. Now there is some speculation about a home for the aged in the future. And who knows?—perhaps there'll be more vocations to the contemplative life, to "vivify and supernaturalize the active." I hope and pray so.

I've been stationed in Versailles for the fall term of 1956, the past year, and will be there this coming year. The very first time I set foot in the convent I felt at home—sensed the steadiness and peace developed through years of living the "regular life." It's amazing the way this atmosphere is maintained no matter how much hustle and bustle goes on at school.

I hope this epistle fills the requirements, Father. The job wasn't an "awful bore". You know our prayers are always with you, and especially as our Father Historian.



First Mother House;
Helmetta



Helmetta Convent Chapel

Rogation Procession:
St. George's, Helmetta,
in Background





Picnic by Helmetta Lake



Present Chapel; Newburgh

Mother House; Newburgh



XI

Sister Mary Michael

If sticking my neck out is not one of my worst faults, at least it's one of the obvious and persistent ones. Ergo, here beginneth Draft #2, Contribution M.M., Opus O.S.H. Circumstances separated me and my instruction sheet or I would never have forgotten biographical data. If this time I don't succeed, twill be because (much as it may surprise you) Sister Rachel has managed to find a few little jobs for me while I'm here.

Born; Evansville, Indiana, December 1, 1925.

Parents; Link Wilson Simpson and Mary Price Simpson. Father was manager of an automobile agency.

Schools; very scattered ones when I was young. Can remember going to school in Nacogdoches, Texas; Louisville, Kentucky; Birmingham, Alabama; Jasper, Fort Worth and Liberty, Texas. Graduated from high school in Texas City, Texas, 1942. Graduated from Texas State College for Women, 1946; graduated from St. Faith's House in New York, 1948.

Jobs; file clerk for American National Insurance Company, Galveston; reporter for Texas City Sun; publicity agent for Dallas Community Chest; parish worker, college worker, and what-have-you for St. Barnabas' Church, Denton, Texas; teacher, secretary and again what-have-you for Holy Cross Liberian Mission. Thence to the Convent of St. Helena. I'm assuming you mean jobs before being a nun.

Volume II - "Convent Days."

Chapter I - Helmetta.

Helmetta itself was funny, just by being Helmetta. A town composed

solely of a snuff mill and a convent is bound to be unusual. First, of course, it was necessary to convince the ticket agent that there was such a place. And if you took a train that might get you nearby, woe betide you. I landed up in South Amboy. At Helmetta we faced the railroad, which apparently was quite a fashionable way to face at one time. Whenever a train came bearing one of our rare guests, we all ran out on the porch to wave to her. And whenever a train came, guest or no, we knew it because the whole house shook - and especially the third floor Novitiate.

One of my chief impressions of life in Helmetta is its formality. We were right across the highway from the Church. But between us and the highway lay the railroad. So each Sunday morning we lined up two by two, juniores priores, and processed about a quarter of a mile down the road to the crossing, crossed the highway and processed the same distance back to the Church. At the time, I thought this sort of thing was just one of the trials of the Religious Life, but have since discovered much to my relief that it was only temporary and not "of the essence."

On the other hand, one of the things I liked about life there was our practice of Holy Poverty. We didn't buy a Christmas tree and didn't have any friends who so kindly gave us one, as people do not. So the Novices went Christmas tree hunting. We couldn't cut down anything, but could pick up things already cut. The best pieces were wired together to make a Christmas tree - not a very artistic one but a very nice one. Neither did we buy flowers when there were none for our Altar of Repose. We went and begged pansies from a man who sold plants. That was our only real experience at begging (aside from writing "appeals," which is a much more genteel way of doing it) and I think it was doubtless good for us. Nor did we buy ice cream; the only ice cream we ever had was postulant-bought. Not ever having guests likely to drop in unexpectedly, everything was figured exactly down to the last scrap. In this connection, i. e. Poverty, we had a Novice who used a watch with only a minute hand. If you could tell her the hour, she could tell you the minute. We have had to change with changed circumstances and I for one think it was good for us. If I sound nostalgic, it's just that I think there was something beautiful - and much less wearing - in the kind of Poverty we had at Helmetta. Though I also think it was more self-conscious and unreal than our present efforts in that direction.

Before leaving the subject of Helmetta, I would like to tell about my first experiment in wine-making. Sister Josephine encouraged us to do things "just for fun" as long as they weren't too time-consuming. So after our grape crop was through and all the jelly and juice we wanted had been made, I was allowed to use the "gleanings" for wine-making, with the idea that if it was good enough we would use it for sacramental wine. She suggested that I make it "dry." My total equipment consisted of two large jars which (when not being used for wine-making) held flowers on either side of the altar. I could find only one recipe for wine, and it sounded very sweet; so to make it dry I

cut the amount of sugar in half. It was stirred daily, and I'm sure no wine ever had such loving care. It was christened "Helenine," as in "Benedictine," but it became stranger and stranger with each passing day. Finally the Father Superior visited and I asked him to taste the Helenine and give his considered opinion of same. It was: "That's vinegar and will never be anything else!" But it made wonderful harvard beets.

Chapter 2 - Newburgh

Negotiations for the purchase of the Mother House in Newburgh began in the Fall of 1952 and we made a number of trips up at various times trying to get the business concluded. Once in particular I remember we went up and were there on Sunday morning for Church. With three of us sitting right under his nose, Father Carruthers preached about us. Then we were met at the Convent by Bishop Campbell and Father Kroll; and a reporter, who took our picture. Said picture appeared next day in the paper over the caption "Important people in Episcopal Church look over property." Truly this is the hidden life!

In May the Novitiate had its week's rest at the beach and then moved to Newburgh to begin operations in earnest. I think it was our first trip up that Father Gunn assisted with (pardon my preposition). He was at the Helmetta Convent to give us a class on the Rule, so he loaded the Station wagon for us when we left - library shelves, all sorts of furniture, everything imaginable. Our tail gate was dragging. Sister Louise was driving, Sister Mary Joseph watching signs, and I following the map. On top of all we had, we decided to carry the "New Fire." We left, carrying the lighted sanctuary lamp, trying to hold its frame steady. But with the heavy load the fire went out when we took the dip going out of the driveway at Helmetta. It was only later that Sister Mary Florence told us we were being doubly superstitious. She had already put it out, and what we were carrying was just from a plain old match.

The next several months were memorable. We painted, scraped, cleaned. We camped out until the other Sisters came at the end of June and a semblance of conventual life began. Once this happened, everything seemed different. We were trying to keep the silence and Vince, the carpenter, felt quite proud of himself for remembering what he called our "quiet hour." Work continued right up until October when the Convent was blessed. By this time we had expended so much - if not blood, at least sweat and tears-that I think the Convent would not have been any more a part of us had we laid every last brick.

I think the change from Helmetta has had a big effect upon us. At Helmetta we were isolated. One of the Sisters did a little work at the parish there but there was not any real contact with nearby parishes. Most of the work we did was that done in the house. We were rather narrow and petty. Since we've moved we work in five parishes nearby, do a lot more mission work and work with guests and, I think, have become more nearly a part of

the main stream of the Church's life. I also think being closer to Holy Cross so the Superior can keep an eye on us has helped us to learn to live more in detail according to the Spirit of the Rule.

Chapter 3 - Versailles

I am very glad I have had this last month here before you asked me to write about it. My other experiences at Versailles have always been somehow "different." First, I stopped here on the way to Africa and my impressions were very strange. One could not talk until one reached the front walk, which did not make sense at all (then). One could talk to the Sisters in the kitchen but not in the refectory, which again I couldn't understand. The only definite memories I have of that visit is Sister Jeannette's jolliness and Sister Rachel's impressiveness.

Then, when I was a postulant, I came here for Retreat and the first year of the Novitiate. It all seemed then very unreal; and as though everyone knew what she was doing except me.

When I was almost ready for Life Profession I was here for six months and got a bit clearer impression of things; except that I had a hard time thinking of the Sisters as anything more than three fourths of the Chapter, who held my fate in their hands, and the whole period was clouded by that very lacking-in-abandonment thought of "What if I don't get elected!" Even then, though, I sensed that this was a Convent of St. Helena and that it was home; that it would be, in a way, even if I had never seen it before and never saw it again. I saw the real need for self-giving in the life under the Rule and in the running of Margaret Hall School. I had visited another convent school, where the Sisters live in the dormitory with the girls. When I came here and realized what it would be like to do that, I was so very thankful for our Rule, which wouldn't sanction it. And yet I realized how hard the Sisters have to work in order to be available and have the influence they should with the girls; since they are always nuns first and only secondarily runners of Margaret Hall School.

This time I think I've been able to see a little more beneath the surface. I've thought often of the fact that without these Sisters there would be no O.S.H. and of all they went through to get it started. The atmosphere here is a bit different from what it is in the other Convent - though less so than I used to think. After being together for twenty years there are a lot of rubs that have produced raw spots; but there is a corresponding number of opportunities for consideration, and many of those opportunities have been accepted.

Spiritual books often talk about what there is to be learned from the old Sisters. I'm sure everyone would agree that we have no old Sisters, but this visit I've gotten a little glimpse of what I could learn from old Sisters when we do have them.

It seems to me I remember that your letter of instruction said that the one thing you wanted was to be able to quote us. I've rambled and been very frank, and will trust your admirable discretion not to quote anything that would hurt anyone.

If you have read this far, dear Reverend Father, it seems to me apt to remark that I'm not the only one who stuck my neck out. You either forgot or didn't know that I like to write so much that I once took it up for a living, and when I really get going it's almost impossible to stop. Except for the fact that I'm being transferred back to Newburgh tomorrow and have to go pack, you'd probably have gotten 29 pages instead of 9.

XII

Sister Clare

Born: New Orleans, Louisiana. February 27, 1907.

Parents: Mother: May Shannon Pierpont. Father: Paul Francis Joseph Meyer. (Daddy had 5 or 6 middle names. I can't remember them all. These may not be right; he used only Paul.)

Brothers: none.

Sisters: two; both younger.

Religion: born an Episcopalian, but there was a long, long period of no Church attendance-atheism, agnosticism or something; even when I believed, I never went to Church regularly until I went back in the fall of 1950.

Education: Newcomb College, New Orleans, Louisiana, B.A. 1928. Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, M.A. 1930.

Jobs: Jobs were all in medical social work, mainly at Charity Hospital, New Orleans.

Received as Postulant: May 6, 1954.

Clothed: June 6, 1954.

Junior Professed: February 6, 1956.

History and Impressions:

I haven't been here long enough to be involved in any of the history; and the "impressions" have had me stymied. I am not sure what you mean by im-

pressions. Before I came to the Order I thought of O.S.H. as "modern monasticism;" that O.S.H. was the means whereby a soul could be reduced to a perfect denudation of spirit and be deprived of all things so that God could enjoy a secure and perfect possession of it (Holy Wisdom) and yet, even though torn in two over some of the things that happen, I still find many of them very, very funny; that O.S.H. would be the means whereby a soul would experience the pain of the nails (The Real Reason for Becoming a Monk or Nun) and yet be enchanted with the Father Turkington Lotus. Some days I still think that this is what the Order is; other days that it is trying not to be like that. It may not be what O.S.H. is like at all; it may just be that that is what I want it to be.

XIII

Sister Alice

Mary Alice Stebbins, 15204 So. Budlong Avenue, Gardena, California. Born, July 7, 1928. Father: Clarence Wilbur Stebbins, born in Denver, Colorado. Mother: Janet Annabell McDowell, born in Pueblo, Colorado. Both families had roots in New England, Mother's family, oddly enough, in Newburgh. One sister, Eleanor, three years my senior, is married with one child born this year. She and her husband became Episcopalians about a year before I did. One brother, Charles, 8 years younger than I, is a senior at Redlands University: still a Baptist, but not ardent.

When I was quite young I attended a Methodist Sunday School but Mother changed us to First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, when I was about eight because she wanted us to be baptized by immersion, which I was a few years later. I was fairly active and regular in attendance, mainly for social reasons. I sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, when pressed into it, and enjoyed various youth groups. The study I remember most vividly was a course on the life of St. Paul; one on comparative religions, although I cannot remember being taught anything vaguely resembling the Catholic faith as I now know it; and endless discussions on "how to" apply Christianity to daily life and social problems. Never having been grounded in the fundamental beliefs of orthodox Christianity by the time I entered college it was not difficult for me to say that I didn't believe in much of anything except God. I did believe that God exists. But I was not sure that He was interested in me personally, and I rather think I preferred He wouldn't bother.

I attended Compton Junior College and U.C.L.A., where I majored in music because I wanted to; and education in order to justify the music courses which I knew would be of little use outside the teaching field. However, I didn't want to teach!

During college I worked at the usual odd jobs, mainly library and cleri-

cal, with some singing at clubs and weddings and funerals. For a year I worked in the office of the Audio-Visual Department of the L.A. Public Schools. After receiving my degree I had to decide whether or not to go on and teach. I managed to dodge the issue again by getting a job in the accounting department of the Southern California Gas Company, which I loathed and where I had worked for several months when I met Father Terry.

I am ashamed to say that I forget to be grateful for the grace that brought me into the Church and to the Order. I was confirmed in February, 1954, and received as a Postulant on June 29, 1954; was clothed January 1, 1955, and Junior Professed January 1st of this year.

Since I have been here such a short time, my history will be impressions of the Order and personalities.

To me the richness of O.S.H. is its freedom within the discipline of its Rule. The scope given for each soul with its particular strengths and weaknesses to go to God in its own way is, I think, a quality which gives the Order attractiveness and flexibility. At first this very freedom was a stumbling block to me and it still is difficult for me to maintain the balance necessary and accept the burden of responsibility it places on the individual. Within the framework of the Rule there are no limits to each soul's response to grace. The consideration of the possibility of contemplative vocations is an instance of this. But there is also no imposing of one person's vocation upon another.

When I first entered the novitiate the absence of obvious rigorousness troubled me and it took me a long time to realize that one can keep the Rule without advertizing it. The externals can become such a part of one that they are as regular and unobtrusive as brushing one's teeth. The externals can also be practiced with a flourish, but I found for myself that I easily slipped into an attitude of blowing trumpets while I gave my alms, if I were not careful and learned to appreciate the gentle, less conspicuous discipline in the house. I have learned, or am learning, that the Rule in itself will not lead me to God. It is a blessed means given me for that end, but the Rule must be lived rather than kept, each section to be assimilated and become part of one. I am glad we have the section on dispensations. I believe it helps us to keep our attitude toward the Rule grateful and loving rather than resentful and dishonest.

I like the fact that the Order's work is not fixed by Rule; that we may at any time follow a call we believe comes from God. I think it gives a spirit of adventure and detachment that is not found in more established orders.

Our observance of holy poverty has been difficult for me to understand. We certainly are not poor in the material sense. I suppose every new postulant comes with the idea of doing something for God and we find that God is doing everything for us. I realize that any affectation of poverty is a snare. We can do without obvious things and yet cling to what should be the essen-

tial part of our self-giving. Poverty is to me a realization of our dependence upon God. If we use what He gives us in the way we believe He would have us use it I believe we are being truly poor. Still, I am ashamed of our comfort. My one criticism of us is that we complain too much about little things. Little inconveniences are God-sent and we refuse them or accept them reluctantly. They are blessings we reject. I don't say that I have the courage to practice this but I believe it is an ideal toward which we must strive. When we have had great problems the Sisters have drawn closer together, been generous and brave. It is in the daily frictions and tensions that we fail.

The personalities which have influenced me most have been Father Kroll and Sister Josephine. In Father Kroll I found a person unfailingly gentle, patient and kind. Though I had difficulty discussing my problems with him, when I did manage to put them into words he was able to reassure me. His guidance was unobtrusive. He left me great scope in my prayer and reading. He did not leap to conclusions, but would think over a problem for weeks and (when I perhaps had forgotten it) recommend a book or a practice which helped.

In regard to spiritual direction in general, I think O.S.H. is very privileged to have the relationship we have with O.H.C. To have the benefit of wise counsel from those who are steeped in the Rule and customs of the Order is of inestimable value and the joy of friendship helps us to be more truly Sisters, I believe. Yet we must face the fact that this very privilege can be misused. We might very easily become spoiled little darlings by having our souls too carefully tended. Too long or too frequent conferences can be a temptation to some of us. They can cause too much mulling over of one's interior, a fixing of one's attention on one's difficulties and they also present an opportunity to clutch at another's interest and affection which few of us are strong enough to resist.

Sister Josephine as novice mistress has been my guide over many mole hills that seemed mountainous to me. Her good sense has been a stabilizer. More than once she has firmly brought me back to earth and the realities of the daily living of the religious life when I would have preferred to remold it into something more pleasing to my romantic ideas. Her constant emphasis on doing His will rather than our own has, I hope, been indelibly impressed upon me. I am not here to fashion myself into something I would like to be, but to abandon myself to whatever He wills to do in me.

As Sister-in-Charge she is firm, steady and fair and able to accept and utilize criticism admirably. There is a democratic spirit in the house that I think must be rare in a religious house where religious obedience could so easily become an authoritarian tool.

I know the Kentucky Sisters only slightly, since I have not lived with them for any period of time. But of the Sisters in this house I can say that

in the short time I have been here I have seen them grow. I have seen them recognize their limitations and weaknesses and battle with their ingrained habits and faults. And I have seen them conquer, though I doubt that they realize it themselves. I truly believe that there is not one of them whose deepest desire is not to be a holy, reasonable sacrifice acceptable unto the Lord. God grant it may be mine.

XIV

Sister Grace, Novice

Here is my opus. As I've only been here a year and a half, I don't know how useful it will be, but I guess that's for you to decide. Anyway, here goes.

About myself:

Born-February 3, 1933, in a Salvation Army hospital in downtown Manhattan. (No affiliation-the doctor just happened to be on the staff there.)

Father-Willis LaMonte Parker, born in Keokuk County, Iowa, grew up all over the West, went to Columbia University, is now in the publishing business. Neither he nor my mother has any religious affiliation.

Mother-Grace Eleanor Evans Parker, born in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh, of a Welsh father and a Mayflower mother, grew up there, went to Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, thence to New York City, got into publishing, met my father in Greenwich Village. Worked in a war plant in World War II, now does free-lance publishing work at home.

Brother-Daniel Evans Parker, born February 8, 1937, now a senior at Haverford College just outside Philadelphia, majoring in philosophy. No religious affiliation, but looking for something solid to stand on.

Sisters-none.

Education-Grammar and high school in Ramsey, New Jersey, where we moved when I was four. Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, where I majored in Spanish, minored in History. One summer at the Juilliard School of Music; one at the Middlebury College summer language schools,

studying Spanish.

Jobs-Student staff member at the college library for most of four years; one year as teacher of Spanish and French at the Knox School, St. James, Long Island, (a private boarding and day school); several summers and just under one full year as clerk, New York Public Library.

Baptized in Advent, 1949, when a senior in high school, at St. John's Church, Ramsey. Confirmed shortly after Easter the following spring. Received as a postulant April 9, 1956; clothed October 9, 1956.

My first contact with O.S.H. came in the autumn of 1953. I had picked up Mother Mary Theodora's pamphlet on the Religious Life and read it with interest, seen the Religious Orders exhibits at General Convention in Boston in 1952 and collected all the pamphlets available there on the subject. I think the white habits had more than a little to do with my interest in O.S.H. in particular! Also, proximity, of course. Anyway, I wrote to Helmetta and got a letter back from Newburgh, saying in effect, "Come and see," and I came and saw. I don't know quite what I expected, but I remember being struck most by the simplicity and naturalness of the atmosphere and the people. At the moment, of course, I had cold feet and was sure I didn't want to enter a convent ever; but I kept remembering that day and, in the fall of 1955, when the first Conference on Vocation to the Religious Life was held, I attended. Sister Rachel was running things as Sister Josephine had suddenly turned up with infectious hepatitis and I remember particularly, when the Sisters of various communities were giving short talks about their particular orders, hers-and she herself-just seemed to appeal to me more than the others.

The conference had its lighter side, of course. A hastily strung shower curtain divided the upstairs guest-house bathroom so that two people could use it at once; and one girl, kind of a last-minute addition to the group, slept on a mattress on the floor in one of the big upstairs bedrooms. And twelve or thirteen guests in the back of the convent chapel provided an interesting parallel to a sardine can. But sharing in the housework and dishwashing, and eating in the refectory-especially on Sunday, with talking meals-was a lot of fun and I think a valuable experience, too. No one, even in a habit, can look unreal and ethereal with her hands in dishwater.

On New Year's Weekend I came again for a brief visit; of which what I most remember is carrying a tankful of weed-killer through the frozen woods while Sister Mary Michael sprayed it on the paths. When I came again in Lent, I had been accepted as a postulant; and when Sister Mary Florence met me at the bus the first thing she did was to kiss me. With her height and mine, that took some doing. Then Sister Mary Joseph spent a while trying dresses and veils on me. She wanted to get Sister Katharine's opinion on veil length, so hauled me out to the pantry in my blue wool skirt, white blouse and bobby socks, with a postulant's veil on top of it all. You can imagine the effect-

and I felt completely silly.

On Saturday, April 7-the day before Low Sunday-my parents drove me up to the convent. Thank goodness my family has never been much for long good-byes. Even a short one was bad enough this time. The next morning I woke up to find the ground deeply buried under snow and in a few minutes a note was pushed under my door. We were snowed in and couldn't get to church for Mass. A fine beginning for my convent life!

Later in the day Sister Clare and I made a snowman-the first one she'd ever made-and we fixed it up to look like one of the Fathers. Sister Josephine got a picture of it with her ever-ready camera, which was lucky because it collapsed before Father Turkington arrived to see it. He came that afternoon, getting through the snow somehow, and I was received just before Mass the next morning. So far as I know, I was the only O.S.H. postulant ever to be received at Mass, so I feel very privileged.

I guess the first surprise I got as a postulant came when I sat down on the bed. No springs!-or rather, there were springs, but they were effectively neutralized by a large bedboard under the mattress. For a few nights I was acutely conscious of that board. The cell I was in was huge; it had only one window and so couldn't be divided as all the other bedrooms had been when the house was being fixed up as a convent. With the small quantity of furniture one has in a cell, it looked even bigger.

Here are other recollections, impressions and so on-more or less jumbled together, but perhaps useful:

Sister Mary Joseph's life profession-May 1, 1956-at St. George's Church in Newburgh. The sanctuary there is so small that they had to take out the altar rail and chairs or throne or whatever it is to accommodate an O.H.C. high mass, and the sacred ministers and servers sat in the back of the choir during the sermon.

St. Helena's Day, with a solemn high mass in the patio and all the preliminary scramble to get a meal ready for sixty or seventy people, figuring where on earth we'd put them if it should rain.

My first long retreat, conducted by Dom Leo Pattison, O.S.B. Very good but rather high-pressure; at least as compared with Father Bessom's also very good one of 1957. I think Dom Leo's main impression of the Convent of St. Helena was jet planes. We're so near Stewart Field that we not infrequently have offices drowned out by overhead maneuvers. Dom Leo said he didn't know how we stood it.

Sister Mary Michael's life profession-November, 1956-and feeding about forty people in the house afterwards, with tables set up in the reception room

and front hall and just about room enough to squeeze between them with a basket of Sister Josephine's very popular homemade rolls.

Sister Clare's (November 6, 1956) and Sister Alice's (January 1, 1957) junior professions; no exciting side events, but sort of thrilling all the same.

My first convent Holy Week; Tenebrae, with our associate Ethel Rooney (taking the watch Thursday evening so none of us would have to stay out of choir) knocking a chair around in the library next door to the chapel for the noise at the end; Maundy Thursday with the Altar of Repose set up in the guest common room and Sister Mary Florence's lovely arrangements making armloads of half-open forsythia look like a beautiful garden all around.

Altar bread department; an unsolicited gift of a baker, in the winter of '56-'57, from a lady in Jersey City, got us started. The Chicago house of O.S.A. gave us two more, and two bench cutters, and now we're supplying several local parishes as well as ourselves. Sister Elisabeth pretty much is the department, with me helping occasionally.

Bells; the one we use in the summer time is a brass locomotive bell and has a little plate saying "New York Central" bolted to it. In the winter time we use another, smaller one which is rung from indoors by a wire led through a hole in the outside chapel door. The wire wore through and broke at least twice last winter—once as I was beginning to ring the Angelus. The effect was most interesting. Then the two o'clock bell is an elephant bell, with a tongue so short and an outside so round that the tongue has to get up to a horizontal position before it hits anything to make a noise. Not easy to ring. We've just been given a big bell (about two feet high) by a local factory which has no more need of it. It will go in the new chapel when we eventually get a new chapel. Meanwhile it is sitting out by the driveway on a few concrete blocks to serve as a conversation piece.

Camp; the novitiate has a week's rest somewhere each summer and the past few years it's been at Camp St. George, the parish camp up near Parksville, New York., on land leased from the City Mission Society. We go up before the camp season opens and live in the mess hall, or whatever they call it, with a large collection of stuffed heads, ranging from moose to racoon (I think), gazing down at us from the walls; and various other forms of wildlife here and there. Last summer we discovered, too late, that a mouse had made her nest in one of the ovens. She escaped, carrying most of her offspring, but left one well-roasted infant behind. We swim, when the water's warm enough, and fish regardless. Sister Josephine's a pretty good fisherman and we generally get a respectable number of pickerel and perch; the lower the proportion of the latter the better, as they're an awful job to scale, and somehow the head fisherman always has something more important to do than clean fish. We also sprawl on the beds and soak up sleep for the coming year.

Bread; Sister Josephine makes most of ours, and are we spoiled! We're particularly fond of salt-rising bread, than which almost nothing smells worse or tastes better. Sister Katharine usually makes that now. The first time guests encounter it they look rather alarmed.

Novitiate; with three postulants impending, we had some alterations done to give us five novitiate cells instead of three and a more useful bathroom. In the process the novice common room, which used to be half the size of a barn and had only one window (in a dormer) acquired two more, and a new floor finish which adds to the brighter effect. It also got its shape evened off and is now only one third the size of a barn. A great improvement. The old big cell had another window and a partition put in, to make two cells. One of the workmen was overheard saying to another, "What on earth do you suppose they want with such a small room?" The new bathroom arrangement gives us two showers, whereas before only the professed could take a shower.

Other building; we've had two new sets of library bookshelves made while I've been here, and they're comfortably filled now. (We're starting on the four thousands in the accession record for the library.) Last summer a member of St. Thomas' Church, New Windsor, where two of us teach Sunday School, offered to build us a long-needed tool shed for the cost of the material. It's just about big enough to turn around in, but fine for hoses and buckets and spading forks. Also for birds; a pair nested in it and brought up a family under the roof.

New refectory tables; bought last fall, I think, and made for us, like the bookshelves, by a local company headed by Mr. Wood. They did the work on the novitiate, too. The long refectory table was almost too big to get in. We finally maneuvered it into the chapel, moving all the choir stalls out of the way, and opened the connecting double doors into the refectory to get it through. Then everybody tore into the job of getting enough linseed oil onto it so that we could eat dinner from it. As it was, I think we put old sheets over it and had a "tablecloth" for the first meal or two.

And of course the dishwasher; white outside and pink within-which we got just before long retreat this past summer and which is a blessing when there are a lot of people around.

Alec and Jen Barrowman-the Scotch caretaker and his wife; we sure are glad to have him around when a fuse blows out or the pump breaks down or a car has to be brought up the hill to take us to Mass on Sunday morning when it's co-o-ld.

Sheba; Alec's dog, a nice Dalmatian who practically never barks, and then in a ridiculous falsetto. She goes along with Alec all over the grounds, running ahead of the tractor, inspecting the latest lot of garbage on the humus pile, and gaily supervising whatever work is being done. When there are

cookies for tea on feast days and Sundays, or when we have a picnic, she's almost certain to show up and want to be fed. Usually she has to be removed bodily. But she's a nice dog and utterly incapable of holding a grudge. She's also apt to arrive when you're meditating outdoors, and wants attention, though she has pretty well learned not to jump up on white habits.

Michael Sydney; a black cat who turned up out of nowhere a few weeks ago--around St. Michael's Day--and who seems to have adopted us. Father Atkinson was here the day (or night) he arrived, and took quite a shine to him, hence the second part of the name. He (or she--we're not sure yet) likes to climb in people's laps while they meditate, or take a siesta on top of a patio table. He also eats things I never saw any other cat look at; such as cookie crumbs, or even baked beans, if he can't find anything better.

Here are some items of past history, gleaned at recreation and such times, which may or may not be in other people's letters:

The experiments in headgear for the O.S.H. habits--and the determination of the sisters that there would be no starch involved. Sister Josephine has some pictures of herself modelling various creations.

The day Father Whittemore--then Superior, I believe--picked raspberries at Versailles, all fixed up in old shorts and a dilapidated broad-brimmed hat; and then sat on the front porch of the convent, practically on the street, to have his tea, still in his berry-picking costume; much to the amusement and embarrassment of the Sisters within.

Getting the school girls off the track as to what Rule was being kept during the two years when it was supposed to be a secret; Sister Rachel said that somehow the kids got the idea that the Sisters were going to be lady Jesuits.

When the Versailles convent was dedicated, the Order didn't have any beds yet--just mattresses on the floor. Visitors looked at them in awe and asked in hushed tones if the arrangement was permanent.

Novice rest at the seashore when Sister Mary Joseph was a novice; the water was cold enough to numb everyone else, but she went swimming gaily out to sea, seemingly unaware of little things like temperature. Quite in character.

Moving to Newburgh--the house had been empty for several years and was a mess--everybody lived on a perpetual mission schedule, trying to get it cleaned up. Father Carruthers helped paint and said at one point that if he ever saw another bucket of Princess Ivory he was going to throw it at someone. We haven't agreed yet on what day it was that the move finally took place. Sister Mary Michael and Mary Joseph claim they were here on

St. Peter's Day, 1953, and went to Mass at St. Thomas' Church. Everybody else claims they weren't and didn't.

The day a tire blew out on the way to St. George's, Newburgh, right in front of the police headquarters; cops erupted from the building and sisters from all doors of the station wagon; and the former offered the latter everything from a free tire change to a ride to church in the police cars. I don't know what finally happened.

On the trip to camp in the summer of 1956 (with the station wagon loaded to the gunwales) we had two flats. Each time, we unloaded the car, got out the spare, waited while somebody put it on, put in the flat tire, drove to a service station, unloaded, got out the flat, had it fixed, put it back, reloaded, and drove on. By the time we got to camp we were so experienced that we unloaded everything in about three minutes flat. (No pun intended!)

And then, about three weeks ago, Sister Katharine and I went to get some medical samples from a local doctor and when I started to pick up the box the girl was terribly worried. "You're sure you can manage it? It's not too heavy?" It weighed perhaps fifteen pounds and I weigh ten times that. Why do people think nuns haven't any muscles?

And that, I think, is quite enough St. Helena's history from me.

XV

Sister Elizabeth, Novice

Looking back over all the circumstances that finally led me to the Order of St. Helena, I'm alternately surprised that I ever got here and impressed by the evidence of God's hand working through it all. Here's that personal paragraph or two that you wanted to begin with:

I was born at St. Mary's Hospital, Kankakee, Illinois, on April 23, 1929, to Mary Mildred Shrake Snediker and Oliver Ralph Snediker, who were then 20 and 24 years old, and was an "only child" until the birth of my brother, Ted, nine years later. There are just the two of us. We moved around a lot, mostly in the West and Mid-West (this is the twelfth state I've lived in), and I usually went to a different Protestant church in each place - generally Methodist. While in college (Purdue University, one year) I started going to the Episcopal Church with a friend and was confirmed in Trinity Church, Columbus, Ohio, by Bishop Hobson, on March 13, 1949. My parents were confirmed less than a year later and, through their connections in Northern Indiana, filled in with Catholic teaching the gaps left from my Southern Ohio instructions.

Schooling-wise, I had the usual first grades, followed by four years of high school (in as many different states - all public schools) after which I worked for 15 months in the office of a Sears, Roebuck store as a sort of combination cashier, accountant, and occasional "secretary", and again during the following summer, after the above mentioned year at Purdue. (I also worked the last two summers of high school, one in a department store as a clerk and the other in a small retail shoe store.) In 1948, I entered nurses' training at Mount Carmel Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, under the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Holy Cross. After graduation, in September, 1951, I worked at "the Mount" until I'd taken the State Board Examinations, then moved to New York ostensibly to be closer to my family, who had by then moved to Long Island, but primarily with an eye to visiting convents. I worked at St. Luke's Hospital, Manhattan, for almost a year before being received as a postulant

in Helmetta, January 7, 1953. My father became critically ill a month later and, because of the family financial crisis produced by his hospitalization, Bishop Campbell, then Superior, granted me a six-months' leave of absence, from March 10 to September 10, during which time I worked at St. Luke's as a "lady," observing a modified rule approved by Father Kroll, but all the time still under obedience as a postulant (and observing the full Rule while at home at the Convent).

I suppose it was on the basis of the latter that my postulancy, weird as it was in some respects, was considered sufficient for the purpose; and I was clothed on October 13, 1953, as Sister Mary Elisabeth. However, just six weeks before I was due for junior profession (and a few days prior to the Chapter) I got what Dom Leo, O.S.R., calls "novice measles" (through my own most grievous fault) and I left on August 31, 1955. The Holy Ghost persevered where I had not, however, and by the following February I was willing to admit my folly and in March discussed with Father Kroll the possibility of my returning. (I'd been working at St. Luke's, during this time, as a head nurse on one of the private floors.)

On October 1, 1957, I returned, was a postulant briefly, and on October 9, Sister Grace and I were clothed as novices; this time I was simply Sister Elisabeth.

Incidentally, you may perhaps know that we again have a postulant on leave of absence because of family problems - her father's illness and subsequent need of help for her mother, too. She will probably be coming back this week-end to stay - I hope so! - but at any rate she has found, as I did, what a help this leave of absence arrangement is. The support of the daily round of offices and other spiritual duties and knowing that you're still part of the Community and being still under obedience provides considerable stiffening for the backbone.

This sounds like an awful lot of "me" and "my" - but I guess you do want some personal stuff, yes?

In the spring of 1953, the house and grounds in Newburgh were bought; and work preliminary to moving began. The house was a fright, having been unoccupied for about seven years, so everyone set to work with brooms (and shovels) and pails of soapy water. Carpenters and electricians swarmed all over, making the necessary structural changes to convert the "country house" into a convent - splitting the large upstairs bedrooms into small cells, etc. (One of the more striking features of this house, in many people's eyes, is that it has 8 bathrooms - one of which is the "master bath," complete with very large marble shower and a brass shower head the size of a large sunflower - must be about eight or nine inches in diameter. The only fly in this luxurious ointment is that the water pressure is rather erratic and never too good, and anyone using said shower is very apt to find herself very soapy and

wet when the water dies away to a trickle.)

My impressions of all this renovating are rather piecemeal, as some of my days off from the hospital were spent in Helmetta "being a postulant," some at home with my family, and the rest in Newburgh. I did get in on quite a bit of the refinishing of floors (we went down to the bare wood and started over again) and painting woodwork, etc. (Some "days off" - but I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Poor Mom couldn't understand why when I visited them I slept for about eighteen hours straight before I could "visit".)

Even though I didn't get in on all of that period of moving and renovating, I could appreciate dimly then, and more clearly now, what the rest of the Sisters were going through. It certainly speaks for their faith and the strength of their vocations, that they stuck it out and kept their tempers even reasonably well. Working that hard and that long without the full convent schedule (they were on mission schedule all the time up here) must really have been rugged.

Ever since you told us about writing these letters I've been trying to figure out the difference I've noticed between O.S.H., Helmetta and O.S.H., Newburgh; and whether or not there is a real difference. Sister Josephine says she thinks there probably is - the Order is still pretty much in the formative stage (or does it grow out of that ever?) and then, too, in a group this small, each individual added or subtracted changes the overall considerably. Much of what I think of as "difference" is undoubtedly in me. The words that come to mind to describe it have rather misleading worldly connotations. (Otherwise I'd say that O.S.H. Newburgh is perhaps more cosmopolitan, more urbane - but words are so unsatisfactory!) Perhaps it's a bit clearer and more accurate to say that it's sort of like the "country cousin" and the "city cousin." I'm not sure but what I like the country cousin better - at least in some respects (greater simplicity, both of life & outlook) - but perhaps the city cousin is a necessary "phase," and the mature O.S.H. will combine the best of both. Again, maybe I'm all wrong - if not about the difference, then in what it consists - my sojourn in Helmetta was so brief.

It's thrilling, being a part of the Order in its early days - knowing that all that happens to us now and what we do is making O.S.H. what it will be. Since I came back I've been aware of a strength and vigor (sort of a fresh air and sunshine-ness) about the Order as a whole, more than I'd ever noticed before. (This sounds rather contradictory to what I just said - I don't think it is - this particular quality of strength has been present all along, I believe, but is more evident to me now.) Since I've been in the Order several major crises have arisen and it seems that through all of these things, plus the perpetual minor "alerts," the Order has grown stronger and steadier.

It has come to be a community joke, especially since the move to New-

burgh, that when someone refers wistfully (or wearily) to, "When things get back to normal," someone else will invariably reply drily, "This is normal."

I imagine that Sister Mary Joseph and Sister Mary Michael have pretty well covered "being a novice in Helmetta" and "the move to Newburgh from a novice's eye view", and the like; and Sister Grace has, I suspect, written up Camp St. George, and Sister Clare will no doubt have told you about the spring in our woods, so I'll take on the infant Altar Bread Department - or add to what anyone else has said about it. (Before I forget, though, has anyone mentioned that according to Colonel Haskins, at Knox's Headquarters next door, the first Purple Heart award was given by General George Washington in what is now our orchard? As the story goes, it was made in the shape of a heart and from a lady's purple petticoat.)

In the summer of 1956, Miss Marie Van Vorst of Sea Girt, New Jersey, contacted Father Kroll about the possibility of our making Altar Bread, offering to send us a reconditioned old baker which she had. We weren't able at that point to take over a business, however small, but were delighted with the offer. The baker arrived that fall, Sister Josephine made me "the Altar Bread Department" and after many trials and errors, and with the aid of Miss Van Vorst's suggestions from her long experience, we had some usable wafers by Christmas time. We started supplying our own needs, then St. George's (Newburgh), and finally O.H.C. (just the Mother House and just wafers - we still can't keep up with your priests' hosts requirements); then Christ Church, Warwick, and St. Agnes', Balmville. We've also made frequent, but not regular, gifts to the other parishes in which we work or with whom we have much contact.

We were almost ready to buy a baker engraved for priests' hosts, and had mentioned our need in the Newburgh Notes of the Holy Cross Magazine, when Mother Gabrielle, O.S.A., St. Anne's Convent, Chicago, wrote to offer us a baker they had. A couple of months later Mother Gabrielle again wrote, this time offering us another baker, engraved for wafers (and considerably newer than our original), and, in addition, two bench-type cutters, which have speeded up that end of the work amazingly. (I might add that new bakers and cutters are quite expensive - the bakers cost about \$225 and cutters are around \$70 each. So, besides the good will which we especially value, the gifts were most generous. It would have been a long time before we could have bought them.)

At present, Sister Grace and I are the only ones operating the department, but we plan to teach the new postulants after they've had a chance to catch their breath, and then to expand our business somewhat. Just as a matter of interest, since last Christmas, our total (net - the waste at this stage of the game is considerable, unfortunately) produced is about 22,500 wafers and some 700 priests' hosts. (One company to whom we wrote about bakers wrote back asking us if we could take on an order for some 10,000,000 wafers and

20,000 priests' hosts! We just laughed, weakly.)

What with the remodeling of the Novitiate this summer, the A.B.D. has been kicked from pillar to post and is now in a part of a wide hall off the Novice Common Room. We have hopes of being in or near the Sacristy in the new Chapel, some day.

One other important addition to our A.B.D. equipment was a rather unusual one, contributed by Father Carruthers. In order to cut the altar bread sheets, which are very brittle and fragile, into wafers or large hosts, the sheets must first be softened in a warm, damp place for several hours. We had quite a time, for a while, finding something for this purpose, trying a large roaster at first, without too much success. Miss Van Vorst said that she'd found old refrigerators quite satisfactory; they're reasonably airtight, so the moisture is kept in, and also the heat, since they're insulated; and in addition they have racks on which you can put the sheets (so they'll get damp but not wet) and a place for a pan of hot water in the bottom. Our only problem now was to find an old refrigerator which someone didn't need! Shortly after, Sister Josephine was talking to Father Carruthers and he asked if there were anything we needed; so she jokingly said, "Yes, an old refrigerator." Lo and behold, he had one! And green, at that! After a good bit of scrubbing it was quite usable, and is serving us very nicely.

This is all I think of that might be usable. If there's anything more I can do, or if I need to clarify anything I've said, I'll be only too glad to. We're all very happy that you're doing this history - hope Sister Smithereen appreciates it!*

*Sister Smithereen is the name of the prophesied future historian of our Order. We keep congratulating ourselves on the great kindness we are doing her by writing this book.

Sister Katharine, Companion

My father's name was Edward L. Truslow, my mother was Susan V. Dunn-ing. Both families came originally from Brooklyn. My parents had three daughters; Mildred, Katharine and Alice. We all graduated from Kent Place School, Summit, New Jersey., but did not go to college, as my father was opposed to college for women. I was the middle child, born March 25th, 1898, in Summit, New Jersey, where my father and mother lived all their married life, and where my mother still lives at 92. My father commuted to business in New York City every day and died of heart failure at the age of 55. We were brought up with the custom of family prayers, but only on Sunday night, and we were not allowed to play games or read secular books on Sunday, either.

My first introduction to the Order was in 1947 when I went out to Kentucky for a visit at your suggestion, and stayed on as a house mother, as you apparently had anticipated and helped to make possible (for which I will never cease to be grateful). I was there four years and they were, I think, four of the most valuable years of my life and four of the hardest. The atmosphere was heavily weighed with seriousness and I was scared all the time, but I learned a lot about myself and my weaknesses. I found there the kind of religious background I was craving; so many of the things I had come to believe through prayer and suffering, which were not accepted by my family or friends, were upheld there. It was my first taste of the Catholic Faith in practice and it satisfied a deep need and longing. I will never forget my first Lent and Holy week. The Maundy Thursday service was a thrilling experience, never to be forgotten. New facets of the faith were opened up, which have been enriching and helpful. I am grateful for those years.

In 1951 I entered the Order as a companion. We were in Helmetta at the time and for the next year and a half. As was to be expected these were years of strain and adjustment and physical difficulties as well, but happy years

none the less.

In the Fall of '52 a call came from Father Carruthers in response to a letter from Sister Josephine enquiring about the possibility of finding a suitable Mother House in this vicinity. Father Carruthers got on the job at once, found "The" house and, within hours almost, he had us on the phone urging us to come and not to delay about the house. Sister Josephine sent Sisters Jeannette and Mary Florence to look the ground over, and their reactions were entirely different, one wildly enthusiastic and the other sceptical; so, for that and other reasons, the matter was allowed to drop for several weeks, much to Father Carruther's distress. Finally, after several trips by various Sisters, the decision was made and in March the deed was signed. In April, the Spring of '54, the fun of converting this lovely house into a convent home began; and from then on the Sisters were on the road much of the time between Helmetta and Newburgh. It was an exciting time, those of us who came up to "help" with the work had the fun of seeing it shape up from week to week. Father Carruthers signed up Vince Rooney as our carpenter, from among his flock, and he and his wife Ethel were our staunch friends and fellow-laborers. Vince's lunch box often carried some special treat for the Sisters from Ethel. Then, of course, there was Charlie the helper, a nice boy. They were very friendly and how they ever managed to get on without Sister Josephine when she wasn't there I'll never know, for when she was there Vince's voice would boom out many times a day, "Sister J O S E P H I N E, can I see you a minute?"

Vince and Charlie left by 5 p.m. but the day wasn't over; the night shift came on anywhere from 6. to 8:30; so we would have about one hour undisturbed to get our dinner and gather our forces to-gether for the next bout. We never knew who it would be this time. Sometimes it was Mr. Sinnamon, the electrician, a St. George vestryman, father of 5, a high school teacher who did our work in his spare time. Again it might be the Father Chaplain himself, dressed in a flamboyant shirt, blue jeans and visor cap in bright red, with John McGinnis, his friend, sexton and fine handy man, to work on the chapel, which they did, every bit, themselves. Another time it might be a group of St. George's men who came to paint and give cheer.

"Cinnamon Bun" insisted that we call him that on our first meeting, and it wasn't long before he was calling us all by some special nickname. It would be hard to give an adequate description of this colorful, robust, jovial character, all 250 pounds of him; in spite of his rough talk and mischievous love of shocking, he won his way with every one of us and we have turned to him many times over these years with one problem and another and he has never failed us.

A couple of incidents might be worth telling to give you an idea of the friendly atmosphere around here. "Cinnamon Bun," as you may have guessed, loved to eat, especially pies and hot bread and sweets, and if we ever had

pie or some nice, rich, fattening desert he always spied it and wheedled a piece out of us. Well, one day we made him a little rhubarb pie all for himself and he was pleased as punch, but the wretched man-what did he do but go and crow over Father Carruthers; told him he guessed he knew, now, who rated around here, etc. Father Carruthers took it up and what a ribbing we did get. Every time he came it was more of the same. SO, one day we decided we'd fix him! It was late afternoon so we went to a farm near by and got some rhubarb, came home and made a fine pie. It was in the oven when he arrived and he all unsuspecting poked his head in the kitchen and said; "Well you can keep your old rhubarb pie because I just had the best one I ever ate." What a climax! We just stood and looked at each other, our jaws hanging open. However he ate our pie, too, and that was the end of that.

Another time we had a birthday party with Vince and Charlie and Alec and Jen (the caretaker and his wife) all sitting around the kitchen table eating pink ice cream provided by Vince. But without a picture of that kitchen, half of the dramatic effect is lost. We have often wished we had taken pictures "before" as well as after, for you wouldn't believe it unless you had seen it. It was a real monstrosity with it's huge coal range, oversized sink and towering cupboard sitting in the middle of a blank wall; and it was terribly shabby and dirty to boot. The dirt defied us in spite of all our efforts to get beneath it.

Our battles with dirt could fill another chapter. We made a valiant effort to keep a small living area free of silt, dirt and wood shavings, etc., but it proved to be about as hopeless a job as sweeping leaves off the back porch in the Fall. We managed somehow to survive the dirt and the kitchen and even to enjoy it. One of our first purchases was a tea wagon, which gave us an escape from the kitchen for some of our meals at least. We would roll it through and around the lumber and dirt and rubble in the refectory and living room (now chapel) out to the patio where we could enjoy the beauty of the garden and the hills beyond and shut our eyes to the mess we left behind.

It was a happy time and none of us who came would have missed it for anything; even to the scraping of floors and the endless cleaning and painting and shopping, etc., not to mention our aching backs and muscles. It was exhausting and we were always glad to go back to our clean, quiet, ordered life in Helmetta between bouts. We returned refreshed in mind and spirit, eager to get at it again and thrilled anew with the beauty of this place and grateful for all the blessings God was so richly showering on us.

Epilogue

by Alan Whittemore O.H.C.

We turn to the future with great confidence. Our Rule says: "We place ourselves unreservedly in God's hands, and we cannot tell for what He will use us. Our concern is to prepare ourselves to receive His gifts of grace, and to use them in perfecting ourselves in the life of prayer, and in mutual loving service to one another. Then we shall be ready for whatsoever call may come."

"Perfecting ourselves in the life of prayer:" let the Sisters first consider that phrase, applying it to their relations with one another. Despite the genuine harmony that breathes through their letters there are strong differences of opinion within the Order of St. Helena. They are signs of vigorous life.

Reality, from God to the atom, presents itself to our minds under two, apparently contradictory, aspects. The clash between authority and liberty may be as good a way as any to symbolize this polarity of truth. Despite the apparent contradiction between authority and liberty, either one of them would be but a caricature of itself apart from the other. Authority without the consent of the governed is not authority but despotism. Liberty without authority is not liberty but license; because genuine liberty is freedom to express the deepest law of our being. Every healthy social group has its conservatives and its progressives; together with those who can see something of the truth on both sides and who steadily strive to unite them. If each Sister continues to give herself utterly and constantly to Jesus, His Holy Spirit will guide her step by step. At one moment she will give way to the opinion of others (and always when those others happen to have authority over her). At another, she will stand bravely and resolutely for what seems to her to be the better course.

Among the proofs that she is genuinely giving herself to God will be these:

1. A growing realization of her own nothingness and her capacity for errors in judgement.

2. The honesty to acknowledge her mistakes when they become evident to her, and to change her position accordingly.
3. Her willingness, upon proper occasion, to express her honest opinion even if it means standing alone.
4. Respect for the opinions of others and a steadfast belief in the sincerity of their motives, even when her own opinions are different.
5. Above all, a steady, merciful and tender love for all her Sisters without a single exception.

We can maintain this attitude by sacramental grace, but only as it is assimilated and made efficacious in ourselves through prayer. Only by the illumination of the Holy Spirit can we, as individuals and as a group, know on which side to lay our weight moment by moment. Perhaps at one time, for example, our life and customs will need to be made less rigid. At another time they may need to be made more so. But one way or the other our course will be fruitful to the degree that it is rooted in prayer. The great Father Augustine Baker over-emphasized this point in order to get it across to the nuns under his guidance; but his principle is true, and applies to the mixed life as well as the contemplative. He wrote: "The only sure way of introducing reforms into contemplative orders is the teaching of true contemplative prayer and not multiplying forms and austerities." I do not believe for a moment that Father Baker deprecated any increase whatsoever in forms and austerities; but he knew that prayer is "the only sure way of introducing (them)."

Along with prayer, and the proof of its reality, goes "mutual loving service to one another." Mercy is one of "the weightier matters of the law." And mercy finds rich opportunity in the course marked out in maxim (4) above. Read (4) again - and (5). Remember them often. Pray about them. Beg God for the grace to fulfil them. "A new commandment I give unto you," says Jesus, "that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Why is "polarity thinking" so difficult for us - holding two truths at once? Why, for example, do we dispense ourselves from lesser matters when we rightly lay stronger emphasis on the weightier matters of the law? Because we are sinners. Our Lord says, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." And by "the other" when he speaks to Religious, he means all the observances of our Rule down to the minutest items "of mint and anise and cummin;" being on time for office, continuing our required Bible reading to the last minute by the clock, not ever whispering on the stairs or in the hall. Father Allen became a saint by loving fidelity to the Rule. Sometimes we aspire to greater mortifications; and the Rule itself bids us pray God "to enable us to deny ourselves yet more." But by and large, so far as outward matters

go, the Rule as it stands in all its balanced fulness of precepts great and small - the Rule itself is our greatest mortification, "a steady living of the crucified life."

The fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace - are "fruits of that Tree of Life to which we have been nailed in our profession;" the Holy Cross which St. Helena sought and found.



Newburgh Convent blessed by
Bishop of New York, 1953



Pool at Newburgh Convent

O.S.H. Family with
Father Turkington,
Present Superior

